

PARTISAN REVIEW

JULY - AUGUST, 1940

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National Defense: The Case for Socialism

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National Defense: The Case for Socialism

Dwight Macdonald

I. *Death of a World*

IT IS HARD TO REALIZE it is only two months since the Reichswehr crossed the Dutch border. In those sixty days, the pattern of Western society and culture as we have known it since the Great French Revolution a century and a half ago, has been dissolving into new and bewildering and terrible shapes. A great many things most of us had come to think eternal now seem to be obsolete: parliamentary democracy . . . the gold standard . . . the British Empire . . . Paris.

"Paris," said the Nazi, Rosenberg, two days after the city was occupied by the Reichswehr, "was the center of mental confusion that pervaded all Europe. This center of unlimited agitation against the rebirth of the European nations, which thought of nothing else but to plunge the world into chaos with the spiritual and political falsification of words, is now firmly in the hands of National Socialist Germany. This means the disinfection of a source of illness. . . ." Beneath the clumsy, turgid phrases so typical of this misbegotten Nazi "revolution" one can see that Rosenberg has intuitively seized the symbolic significance of Paris, for a century and a half the center of the most advanced European cultural and political consciousness, being occupied by the armies of victorious National Socialism.

A year and a half ago I wrote here: "If France goes fascist, we shall be saying goodbye to Western culture in all seriousness and for a long time to come." And in the same editorial, I quoted our Paris correspondent: "Daladier bears a more sinister resemblance to one Heinrich Bruning than to the Napoleon Bonaparte he apparently fancies himself to be." The fears then expressed have been only too well realized. An authoritarian constitution written by the third-rate political intriguer, Laval, and modelled, as though

to wring the last drop of humiliation, after the provincial "corporative" regimes of Spain and Italy, has now been adopted by the French parliament, which has also voted its own suicide and handed supreme power over to the octogenarian General Petain. LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY has yielded to LABOR, FAMILY, FATHERLAND. It is characteristic of the fascist "world revolution" that the eighteenth century abstractions sound considerably more modern than their 1940 successors.

For this new world order that is now being born is one that is as contradictory, backward-looking and unpredictable as it is sinister. Two things only are clear. One is that the stalemate into which world capitalism had fallen in this century, a stalemate which the last war merely intensified, has been broken in a few weeks by the powerful military instrument so patiently and cunningly forged during the last seven years in Germany. And the other is that this is no brave new world, but a hideous distillation of all the worst features of the old one.

1914 AND
1940

"What was our crime?" asked a French broadcaster after the surrender. "It was simply a belief in a way of life that our experience has proved to be suddenly unadapted to the times." The great meaning of the war is that democratic capitalism has been "suddenly" revealed to be historically outworn. Frightened at the terrible weaknesses of the democracies, the liberals shrink from drawing the full conclusions from recent events. The more "orthodox" Marxists also hesitate to probe too deeply, fearful of finding in fascism some strange new monster which will not fit into their rigid categories.

This war seems to me to differ from the last in that it is not a conflict between rival imperialisms of the same general order but rather a *social* war between different kinds of systems. On this hypothesis alone can the differences between the two wars be explained.

The Nazis have won because they have a crushing superiority in armaments which the Kaiser's army did not have and which could only be created by a radical change in the economic system. They have won because they devised entirely new military tactics which expressed on the battlefield the superior organization of their

economy. They have won because large sections of the ruling classes in the democracies have turned traitor to their own governments and aided the Nazi victory from behind the lines, apparently recognizing that fascism is a superior form of ruling class domination to democratic capitalism. Such large-scale treachery, unknown in the last war, characterizes social wars, where the clash of social ideas cuts across national boundaries. Above all, the Nazis have won because they were fighting a new kind of war that, as clearly as Napoleon's military innovations, expressed a new kind of society, while the democracies were fighting the last war over again, since their own social system remained essentially unchanged since 1918.

Most significant of all is the contrast in the *results* of the two wars. In 1918 the victors set up the Versailles system, which carried to a pitch of insanity the nationalisms which had been strangling European economy for half a century. Europe became more "Balkanized" than ever. The war settled nothing because it was an anachronism, a nineteenth century national war in a twentieth century whose productive forces had developed far beyond the nationalist stage.

This time the Allies were fighting for the same end as in 1914; there were even reports that conquered Germany would be redivided into the small states of the pre-Bismarck era. Not so the Nazis. Their victory means the end of Europe, the end of the whole nationalist epoch. We are already living in what some one has called the "Post-European period." Unlike the last war, this time the defeated nations are actually occupied by the victor, most of them being incorporated into the Reich or ruled as colonial provinces. So overwhelming is the German military superiority that those nations not formally occupied have lost even the illusion of neutrality or national independence. A "*grossraumwirtschaft*," or "large-scale super-national economy," is coming into being. National boundaries are dissolving, international trade is changing its character, and a new Europe, united as one vast concentration camp under the Nazi bureaucracy, is coming into being. The process of unification has been stimulated all over the world: Japan moves to include all Eastern Asia under its own "Monroe Doctrine"; Hitler's jackals, Italy and the Soviet Union, snatch up small nations in the Baltic and the Balkans; and the United States pre-

pares to take into protective custody the entire North and South American continents. In sixty days the whole pattern of nationalism has been revealed to be obsolete, and the nations of the world are rapidly assembling into a few vast continental empires, each dominated by a single great power.

**"BLACK
SOCIALISM"**

The Nazis have presented to the ruling classes of Europe and America their own visages in a mirror. And they draw back in horror. But the image is true: this is the only way out for their society. It is this consciousness which paralyzes the resistance of the capitalist democracies. A social system cannot fight against its own future. For all their operatic battlecries, statesmen like Roosevelt and Churchill and Reynaud recognize in their enemy the characteristics of the system of class rule they are defending, only carried out to the terrible ultimate conclusion. The same economic tendencies as lead to the swallowing of hundreds of little firms by a single great monopoly have now led to the control of the entire productive forces of the nation by a single "super-trust," an uneasy amalgam of bureaucrats, army generals, and finance capitalists. Like its prototype in industry, this super-trust carries on the national production in a much more rationalized, coordinated, planned and purposeful way than is possible in a free capitalist society.

For years Marxists have been quite correctly pointing out that, economically, capitalism is ripe and rotten ripe for socialism. The great tragedy of our age is that, for various historical reasons of which the tragic degeneration of the Soviet Union was perhaps the most important, the working class has been unable to overthrow capitalism and bring into being the long overdue socialist society. Unable to give birth to a natural child, history has whelped the monster, fascism, which combines the centralized state power and conscious economic planning of socialism with the most hideous social and political features of decaying capitalism. It is a sort of "black socialism," the best answer that the historically obsolete bourgeoisie can give to the imperious demand of modern society to be *organized*.

Fascism can thus organize national production because it has brought under state control the class conflict which paralyzes the capitalist democracies today. Here, too, it is a grim caricature of

socialism, substituting for the real and permanent *resolution* of the class struggle in the victory of the oppressed class, an artificial and temporary *suppression* of class conflict. How has this been brought about? The usual Marxist answer is: one class (the bourgeoisie) has through its instrument, the Nazi bureaucracy, established a crushing dominance over the other (the proletariat). Hence there is a difference only in degree between German fascism and democratic capitalism.

I agree that the Nazis came to power as the agents of the big bourgeoisie, but I think that a basic shift of power has come about during the seven-year *wehrwirtschaft* effort. (Note that the best-known leftwing studies of German fascism—Dutt, Guerin, Henri, Schuman, etc.—concern themselves with *how* the Nazis came to power rather than with the internal development of the Nazi state, especially since 1936.) I think most Marxists have failed to give enough weight to two important aspects of Nazism. (1) It differs from other forms of repression in being not only terror *from above* (the Gestapo, the concentration camp) but also a political movement *from below* with a “radical” social ideology which attracts mass support. For years the leftwing press has been full of reports of widespread unrest in Germany, of low morale in the army. When war came, however, contrary to expectations, this unrest failed to break above the surface and the army’s morale proved to be remarkably high. (2) Nazism also differs from other forms of reaction in that, because of the sharpness of the internal social crisis and the magnitude of the rearming job to be done, the bourgeoisie were forced to give the bureaucracy unparalleled powers over *its own* (as well as the workers’) interests. Granted that this surrender was made, in the beginning, quite deliberately to organize a more effective prosecution of a war for the common interests of the German bourgeoisie—as a sort of capital investment, a temporary sacrifice which would pay big dividends later on. But in the course of seven years of “war socialism,” strange and (to Marxists and businessmen alike) unexpected things have happened. The national economy has come to be organized on the basis of production rather than profit. It is true that the elaborate mechanism of capitalism still persists—loans, credits, interest, dividends, stock exchanges—but, from being the living heart, the *raison d’etre* of the economy, all this has become merely the book-

keeping method of the State. It is also true that the bourgeoisie are still greatly favored over the workers and that they are allowed profits (within limits fixed by the State). But they seem to have been relegated to the position of the Merovingian kings who kept the *forms* of imperial power while the Mayors of the Palace exercised the substance—until they finally thrust aside the kings altogether and set up their own Carolingian dynasty.

THE REVOLUTION OF OPPORTUNISM

Does the Nazi bureaucracy represent a new ruling class in the sense that the bourgeoisie once did? And is fascism a new form of society as capitalism once was, and with comparable chances of permanence and stability? These are the key questions of our time. Here I have space only to suggest, briefly, the lines along which I think some answer may be found.

(1) The Nazi bureaucracy represents a different form of political domination from the old bourgeoisie, based on political *control* of the means of production rather than on private *ownership* of them. A suggestive parallel is what has happened in our own large corporations, where a similar split between ownership and control has taken place, and where the legal owners, the stockholders, have been pushed aside by those in actual control, the management and directors.

(2) What makes this new form of state power—which I see also existing in Russia today—so baffling, especially to Marxists, is that the new rulers carefully preserve the old property forms. Thus Hitler has left untouched the legal and financial structure of capitalism, just as Stalin has religiously preserved the forms of socialized economy. From this, many Marxists conclude that Germany is still a capitalist state and Russia a workers state, quite overlooking that an entirely new content has been injected into these forms.

(3) This new content comes from the *manipulation* of the old forms for objects which these forms did not historically come into existence to fulfill. Thus Hitler manipulates the forms of German capitalism not for capitalist profits, but to build up a strong national war economy—and to keep his bureaucracy in control of it. For similar ends, Stalin manipulates the forms of socialism, perverting them from their historical functions into an apparatus for keeping his gang in power.

(4) From all this follows the most striking characteristic of this new form of political rule: its opportunism. The Nazis have maneuvered about between social groups in Germany, now playing a "left" game and now swinging over to the Junkers and generals, with one aim: to maintain their control by playing one social group against another. (So, too, Stalin used the Bukharinist right to crush the Trotskyist left, and then broke with the right and initiated the Five Year Plan, for advocating which Trotsky had been sent into exile.) In the fields of foreign policy, it is the same: the Berlin-Moscow axis is the grand monument. Also in ideology, as any one knows who tries to find a consistent thread in Nazi propaganda over a period of years. These bureaucracies live from hand to mouth, adopting whatever political and ideological line happens to meet the problem of the moment.

**O BRAVE
NEW WORLD?**

What is the nature of the beast, then? Trotsky insists it is no more nor less than the familiar phenomenon of Bonapartism, in which a clique maintains itself in power by playing one class off against another, thus giving the state power a temporary autonomous character. But these modern totalitarian regimes are not temporary affairs: they have already changed the underlying economic and social structure, not only manipulating the old forms but also destroying their inner vitality.

Is the Nazi bureaucracy a new ruling class, then, and fascism a new form of society, comparable to capitalism? This doesn't seem to be true either. The bourgeoisie came into power with a consistent ideology, based on a new form of economy which broke sharply with feudalism and involved a total reorganization of society. The Nazi ideology is a patchwork of old concepts—mediaeval anti-Semitism and "blood thinking," nineteenth century chauvinism, Machiavellian power cynicism, etc.—which have no consistency and no aim beyond the utility of the moment. Fascist economy preserves the forms of capitalism while destroying their meaning. The extreme difficulty which one has in classifying this strange monster comes from the fact that fascism has destroyed the profit-and-property motor force of the old bourgeois economy, without evolving any general rationale, any new dynamism to replace it. Fascism has closed the door on the old world, but it

has opened no door into a new world. The bourgeois revolution expressed a new world-view, whose concepts applied to war and peace, to all nations and all climes. But German fascism is a highly specialized social form designed for one quite specific and limited purpose: to win the war which has just been won. This done, the intricate mechanism stands idle. How can it be adapted to the new tasks?

This is a problem for the political analyst, but it is also a problem for Hitler. His real difficulties have only *begun* with victory. What profound changes must take place inside Germany, which for seven years has cut her economy and society to the pattern of discipline, sacrifice, short rations, now that she has suddenly been changed from the great "have-not" into the great "have" nation? Can Germany exploit the rest of Europe as a master-race without ranging all classes in all nations against her, and will she be able to prevent the subject nations from applying her own fascist teachings against her? If Hitler tries to rule Europe through native bourgeois satraps, as in France now, will this not aggravate the class struggle in those countries beyond all control? What sort of economy can be set up? Will Germany try to replace the British Empire, accepting international trade and the gold standard? If so, will not the Nazi bureaucracy—now at the pinnacle of their power, since it is *their* war, carried out against the warnings of both the old Army caste (cf. General Fritsch) and the big bourgeoisie (cf. Thyssen)—will they not be reluctant to retire in favor of the business men who must dominate such an economy? But if the present barter system and state control are spread through Europe, will they prove to have enough dynamism once the war aim has been removed? Above all, it must not be forgotten that the Nazi system was designed to unify a homogenous nation for a supreme war effort, and that the problem now is to rule over and organize a dozen different nations, for whose peoples Hitler must appear not as a deliverer but as a conqueror. "Fascism is not an export commodity," Hitler (or was it Mussolini?) once said. He now faces the paradox he foresaw: Europe has been united, but by an army whose creed is nationalism.

That the new Nazi order in Europe will be barbarous and inhuman, this seems clear. But that it will also be stable seems very doubtful. There will be plenty of convulsions, overturns, explosions in the years immediately ahead, plenty of "revolu-

tionary situations.” That gravedigger of capitalism which Marx and Engels saw on the far horizon has finally appeared, wearing not the overalls of the proletariat but the uniform of the Reichswehr. But, although fascism has destroyed the old social order, it is unable to bring the new society into being. That task is still reserved for the world workingclass. It is weak, perhaps weaker and more demoralized today than at any time in the last hundred years. But history in the next decade will present it a last chance. The totalitarian bureaucracies are still in their Merovingian phase: these “Mayors of the Palace” have yet to set up their own imperial dynasties. If they succeed in working out a new and stable world order, then our civilization will enter on a new age of darkness. But it is premature to pronounce any elegies. It is the death of a world, but not the death of the world.

II. *What Must We Do To Be Saved?*

The speed and scope of the Nazi victory abroad has made national defense the one great theme of American politics today. Two months ago, the main question was aid to the Allies. Now France is part of the Nazi war front, and even President Roosevelt seems to have given up the idea of coming to the rescue of England. Every one, for various reasons, agrees that “Hitler must be stopped,” every one agrees that the cause of democracy is as good as lost in Europe, and practically every one—again for various reasons—now seems to agree that, for an effective defense program against the Nazi menace, we must put our faith in the American version of the same kind of social system that has failed so miserably abroad to resist the fascist drive. It is as though no one had ever heard of Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, France or England.

Here I am not much concerned with the American bourgeoisie: they will turn to a native fascism or welcome the Nazi variety, depending on the situation, when it seems prudent to do so, just as their class brothers have done in Europe. What must be of concern to any one on the left, however, is that the blitzkrieg has stampeded into a “*union sacrée*” with the bourgeoisie practically all those groups and individuals which until May 10 had continued to resist the mounting war hysteria. The isolationists have become “insulationists,” the insulating material being stout

armor plate. The great CIO unions in steel, coal, automobiles, and other basic industries, which a year ago were passing anti-war resolutions, are being eased by their leaders into the national defense camp. Since May 10, the corporal's guard of left intellectuals who stuck to an anti-war position has been reduced to microscopic dimensions. Opportunist left politicians like Norman Thomas and Jay Lovestone have grown steadily more articulate about the horrors of fascism and steadily less so about those of democratic capitalism—protesting all the while of course that, wherever their feet seem to be taking them, their hearts are still in the highlands of socialism. The Trotskyist movement—both wings of it—is the only significant political group which holds firm to a revolutionary antiwar line.*

As I have already indicated, I am not at all satisfied with the analysis of the war and of the nature of the totalitarian states held to by the Trotskyists and other "orthodox" Marxists. I do agree, however, that the victory of fascism over here is assured unless the present democratic capitalist system is replaced by a democratic socialist government of the workingclass.

WILL IT BE A DEMOCRATIC DEFENSE?

The grossest illusion of all is that it will be possible, under capitalism, to defend American democracy by democratic means. The liberal weeklies, with their customary zeal in giving the ruling class "realistic" advice, are constantly admonishing Roosevelt that effective defense means an extension rather than a contraction of the social program of the New Deal. They are much cheered by Roosevelt's assurances that not a hair of the New Deal program will be touched. But words are one thing, actions another. And even as he has protested his devotion to the widest democracy, Roosevelt has, since the blitzkrieg struck two months ago, led a retreat towards reaction of vast and terrifying proportions.

Not so long ago the left was talking hopefully of a third party. Today there are not even two parties. The Democrats have

*I have said nothing of the Stalinists because, although by far the biggest antiwar group in the country, their stand is only a reflection of Soviet foreign policy. If it suits the Kremlin's interests, they will tomorrow become the most violent supporters of the Roosevelt national defense program, just as they were up to the Stalin-Hitler pact. Their fake "revolutionary" propaganda compromises the whole fight for the real thing and is a big factor, here as in France, in demoralizing and confusing the working-class. Such "allies" were better on the enemy's side—and, indeed, they seem to be edging over in that direction since Stalin has become alarmed at the completeness of Hitler's victory.

Republicanized their domestic policies (introduction of Knox and Stimson into the cabinet, handing over of the whole defense program to several dozen bankers and corporation heads) while the Republicans have Democratized their foreign program, dropping their "isolationist" line and nominating for President a man whose views on war policy are indistinguishable from those of Roosevelt. And both parties have joined forces to prepare national defense under the banner of reaction (anti-alien laws, "coordination" of North and South America under the State Department, "fifth column" attacks on Reds and unions, relaxing of war profits curbs and sabotaging of Wagner Act and wages and hours laws, universal conscription in peacetime, etc., etc.).

ROOSEVELT AND RUIN

Many left supporters of the national defense program will grant, as indeed they must, the reactionary trend of both parties today. But, they insist, we must stop Hitler under whatever kind of regime is at present politically possible and if the labor movement is not now strong enough to force a democratic defense, we must put up with a reactionary defense. Better to stop Hitler under command of Wall Street, even if it means a temporary sacrifice of living standards and civil liberties, than to fall, all of us, workers and businessmen together, under Hitler's yoke.

This argument rests on two propositions: (1) German fascism is not a variant of the capitalism we know over here, but is a new kind of social system, something so much more threatening to all progressive values that it is worth submitting to almost any degree of domination by our own big bourgeoisie if that is the price of effective national defense against the enemy. (2) The kind of governmental regulation which is put into effect on M-Day is dictatorship, but it is not the sort of totalitarian *political* movement we know as fascism. Therefore, it will be possible to get our liberties back after the war just as we did after the last war, when war-time dictatorship was also put into force. They will be somewhat battered, it is true, but even so there will be more chance to resume the struggle for social progress than there would be under a victorious Hitler.

Many orthodox Marxists reject both these propositions, refusing to make any basic distinction between German fascism and

American capitalism. They insist that the outcome of this war is as much a matter of indifference to the working class as was the outcome of the last war, and they fail to see any essential difference between M-Day dictatorship and fascism.

For my part, as I have already indicated, I agree both that German fascism is "different" and that M-Day dictatorship is not fascism. But it is from these very propositions that I infer the necessity of a socialist defense against fascism.

It is precisely because fascism is qualitatively different from democratic capitalism, in the sense that it is a more advanced and effective form of organizing national production, that it must inevitably displace the latter, whether by internal treachery or by external military conquest, or by both as in France. I don't think Hitler can be "stopped" by a more primitive form of the same sort of exploitative class society. Nazism can be conquered only by another fascist state, that is by a *total* regime imposed by the present ruling class, or by a different kind of total state: a socialist workingclass state. This latter would be able to organize production even more efficiently than fascism, and would attract the widest sort of mass support. It could put up an effective resistance to fascism both internally and on the battlefield. Fascism is conquering because even an imitation socialism, still riddled with the contradictions of capitalism, has proved superior to the old order. Why would a *genuine* socialism not prove even more effective?

As for M-Day not meaning fascism, this of course is just why it will not be enough to insure a victory over a fascist power. If a socialist defense is rejected, therefore, the choice seems to me to be not between victory under Willkie-Roosevelt or defeat by Hitler, but rather between defeat under Willkie-Roosevelt or victory under a native fascist regime (perhaps led by one of those individuals). The lesson of France seems clear to me: democratic capitalism is historically obsolete, and in a struggle with fascism it must either be defeated by its relative inefficiency and by the treachery of the bourgeoisie and the apathy of the workers, or else it must itself go fascist as the price of victory. The present stampede by the left intellectuals and politicians and the labor movement to line up behind the Roosevelt-Willkie national defense program seems to me suicidal. The American workingclass is rushing back into the house of democratic capitalism just as the whole structure is collapsing.

**WEHRWIRTSCHAFT
MEANS FASCISM**

That democratic capitalism cannot effectively organize national production for war is now being admitted even by its own leaders. "We have nothing to offer," said Winston Churchill, speaking for his cabinet a few days after assuming power, "but blood, toil, tears and sweat." And the *N. Y. Times* recently headlined a speech by President Roosevelt comparing democracy and fascism: "DEMOCRACY MAY NOT BE QUITE SO EFFICIENT, HE SAYS, BUT THAT IDEA IS OVERRATED."

What a retreat from the proud materialism of the twenties, when efficiency was the supreme value of all good Americans! When capitalist society, based on materialistic conquest, admits its relative inefficiency to fascism, the game is up.*

The dilemma which confronts any democratic capitalist *wehrwirtschaft* ("war economy") is that it can not win the enthusiastic support of either the masses or the bourgeoisie, nor can it establish sufficient control over either class by force.

Since it is impossible to satisfy the material needs and desires of the masses, what is needed here is a judicious mixture of demagoguery and repression. This is just what Hitler relies on, but Roosevelt finds himself unable to turn the trick. With the best will in the world, he cannot completely crush the workingclass, since they will consent to such a loss of their liberties only if they are convinced they have something to gain. But all of Roosevelt's efforts to arouse mass enthusiasm for "democracy" seem to be inadequate: The Word is indeed impotent. What is required is what Hitler has been able to supply: a new "radical" demagoguery which boldly recognizes the bankruptcy of the old system (which the masses have found wanting) and which pretends to create a superior new one. But the demagoguery of both Roosevelt and Willkie, as is inevitable, proceeds on the contrary assumption: that the present system is desirable and must be preserved just as it is—even, indeed, just as it was in the time of Lincoln and Jefferson!

The same problems arise in relation to the bourgeoisie. As the experience of this war has shown, certain sections of the ruling class in the democracies already recognize the superiority of fas-

*Scapegoats to explain this failure are, of course, in order now. Most popular is the Popular Front. But those who believe in this bogeyman must explain how it is that (1) France could not rearm any better under the two years of conservative governments which followed the Popular Front, (2) England, which enjoyed a conservative government for many years before the war was no better prepared than France, and (3) production of munitions in England quadrupled, according to a recent report to parliament, between April (when a straight Conservative government was in power) and June (after a month of the Churchill-Labor Party regime).

cism as a form of class rule and welcome even a foreign invader as a means of getting it. They betray their national interests to remain loyal to their class interests. Even those bourgeoisie who are loyal, furthermore, can cause much trouble to a conservative anti-fascist regime of the sort now being installed in this country. Lacking any real mass support, such a government finds itself unable to control individual capitalists even in the interests of their own class. It must respect—as the Nazis need not—the “rights” of private property and the whole archaic structure of the law.

In the current issue of *Fortune* there is an authoritative analysis of the war economy of the French and British empires. Its general point is that the Allied war effort broke down because it was not totalitarian. *Fortune* draws quite frankly some interesting conclusions as to what must be done, under the present system, to prepare effective war against German fascism. Three may be noted: (1) That war can no longer be considered an “accident,” an episodic interruption of “normal” peacetime conditions, but rather must henceforth be considered “a recurring phase of democratic existence.” (2) That the kind of *Wehrwirtschaft* built up in Germany is something quite different from the M-Day administrative regulations now being prepared over here. (“Thus France went to war under what are commonly described as totalitarian controls. . . . And yet the state did not really take charge. It simply established its civil servants and military officers inside the normal economy, which was still run by much the same masters.”) (3) This *Wehrwirtschaft* is a totalitarian business, which subordinates *all* classes to its purposes. (“In a war economy the government makes the decisions. It commands a man’s soul and his labor and it rations his bread. The government fixes prices and wages and profits.”)

As to the political alchemy necessary to bring into being this totalitarian *wehrwirtschaft*, on this *Fortune* is silent. Nor does the American bourgeoisie as yet seem to realize that more than conservative repression and propaganda will be required, that an anti-capitalist movement *from below* is necessary, something on the Huey Long or Father Coughlin model. But they have seen what happened to the European democracies, they have probably several years of peace ahead, and they may well learn the lesson.

What all those who are now supporting national defense under Roosevelt-Willkie are really preparing is either American defeat—or American fascism.

THE CASE FOR A SOCIALIST DEFENSE

It is not hard to demonstrate that a collective economy democratically controlled by the workingclass—which may be roughly described as “socialist”—can produce a *wehrwirtschaft* far superior to anything possible under democratic capitalism, and even considerably more formidable than the best fascism can do. The problem, in war as in peace, is how to bring order out of the anarchic chaos into which capitalism throws the industrial mechanism. This requires a centralized control by the state, the resolution of the deadlocked class struggle, the enlisting of the support of the masses, and the loosening of private property’s stranglehold on the productive forces. Fascism is a makeshift expedient to accomplish these aims, an *ersatz* socialism which suppresses the class struggle by force and smoothes it over by demagoguery. But the old contradictions still exist beneath the surface, holding back the war effort and blocking all vistas into the future. By replacing the historically obsolete bourgeoisie by the great mass of workers, whose interests correspond with those of advancing production, socialism permanently liquidates the crippling class struggle and organizes national production along rational lines.

Socialism can organize national production effectively because it can plan and direct without worrying about private property rights and the antiquated mummery of profits, interest, gold reserves, etc. Fascism, because it has to accomplish its collectivism by stealth, so to speak, without disturbing the *forms* of capitalism, wastes much energy in cumbersome bureaucratic strategems. (See Guenter Reimann’s *The Vampire Economy* for copious examples of the waste and inefficiency caused by the Nazi effort to create a collective economy *de facto* without expropriating the bourgeoisie *de jure*.)

Obviously a socialist regime would rally enthusiastic mass support, since (with profits out of the way and production rationally organized) living standards could be maintained if not raised

without slackening the war effort. We see already what is in store for the masses under the present defense program. And it is well known that the fascist war effort has considerably worsened the living standards of the German workingclass.

Thus socialist propaganda, corresponding to reality, would be much more effective in building morale than is the propaganda of either Roosevelt or Hitler. Socialist repression, also, being exercised against the former ruling class—a small minority—would be much less damaging to the war effort than the large-scale repressions necessary in both the bourgeois democratic and fascist forms of *wehrwirtschaft*. The huge repressive apparatus the Nazis must maintain against the masses, like the equally large bureaucracy they must keep up to control private business, is both a drain on the economy and a source itself of damaging friction.

Socialist propaganda would be effective not only inside the United States but also throughout the world, notably in the enemy's camp. We must remember that the Allies found it impossible to put down the Bolshevik revolution by intervention because the French and English workers refused to fight their class brothers, striking behind the lines and mutinying in the army. And that Hitler in his propaganda finds it well to appeal to the "workers of the world" against the "plutocrats." A socialist workingclass regime would arouse a "fifth column" in any capitalist or fascist army far more formidable than the "fifth columns" Hitler arouses (also of class brothers—this time of the ruling class).

Above all, socialism would be superior to democratic capitalism in that it would be fighting, not a *defensive* war, to preserve a "lesser" against a "greater" evil, but a crusade which would take the *offensive* for a positive social good, for a form of society which is historically progressive, which does not conflict with but carries further industrial progress, and which for the great mass of people represents a giant stride forward towards a better kind of life. And it would be superior to fascism in that it would look towards the future, presenting a consistent and progressive new form of society, whereas, as we have seen, fascism is a negative, reactionary movement, with no general solutions for the future and no historical perspective beyond war, repression and death.

Let us grant all this, comes the reply, but the socialist program today remains an abstraction. How can even the first steps be taken

towards implementing it? Is not the workingclass everywhere in full retreat, where it has so far escaped the fascist yoke? And even if the workers later on show some signs of revolt, where will they find their leadership? From the corrupt and discredited Second and Third Internationals? From the tiny, isolated revolutionary groups, split by sectarian quarrels? And finally, has not the authority of Marxism itself, the very fountainhead of all revolutionary science, been shaken by the failure of its disciples to give adequate answers, in practice and in theoretical understanding, to the historical developments of the last two decades?

I must admit that these questions are, to say the least, justified. The sort of "revolutionary optimism" favored in certain quarters—an optimism which becomes more obstinate and irrational the worse things turn out—seems to me to do no service to the cause of socialism. We must face the fact that the revolutionary movement has suffered an unbroken series of major disasters in the last twenty years, and we must examine again, with a cold and sceptical eye, the most basic premises of Marxism.

But I cannot see that we must, therefore, do what so many intellectuals of the left are now doing: give up the struggle for socialism and accept as the "lesser evil" to fascism a form of society which they themselves well know is historically bankrupt, without health and without hope. Those who are now hastening to rally to the Roosevelt defense program are betraying that working-class movement which is the only hope for our civilization's future, and they are stultifying themselves as intellectuals. The intellectual, if he is to serve any useful function in society, must not deceive either himself or others, must not accept as good coin what he knows is counterfeit, must not forget in a moment of crisis what he has learned over a period of years and decades. Only if we meet the stormy and terrible years ahead with both scepticism and devotion—scepticism towards all theories, governments, and social systems; devotion to the revolutionary fight of the masses—only then can we justify ourselves as intellectuals.

Karl J. Shapiro

DEATH OF EMMA GOLDMAN

Triumphant at the final breath,
Their senile God, their cops,
All the authorities and friends pro tem
Passing her pillow, keeping her concerned.
But the cowardly obit was already written:
Morning would know she was a common slut.

Russians who stood for tragedy
Were sisters all around;
Dark conscience of the family, down she lay
To end the career of passion, brain a bruise;
And mother-wonder filled her like a tide,
Rabid and raging discipline to bear.

In came the monarchist, a nurse,
And covered up her eyes;
Volkstaat of hate took over: suddenly
The Ego gagged, the Conscious overpowered,
The Memory beaten to a pulp, she fell.
It remained to hide the body, or make it laugh.

Yet not to sink her name in coin
Like Caesar was her wish,
To come alive like Frick, conjecture maps,
Or speak with kings of low mentality,
But to be left alone, a law to scorn
Of all, and none more honored than the least.

This way she died, though premature
Her clarity for others;
For it was taught that, listening, the soul
Lost track and merged with trespasses and spies
Whose black renown shook money like a rat
And showed up grass a mortmain property.

Rimbaud: Life and Legend

Morton Dauwen Zabel

HAD RIMBAUD NEVER LIVED we should have been obliged to invent him. One is conscious of many temptations to audacity in reading the poet of *Le Bateau Ivre* and *Une Saison en Enfer*.^{*} One is conscious in reading his critics and interpreters that these temptations have seldom been resisted. They have resulted in some of the boldest hypotheses and most strenuous flights of elucidation in modern criticism. Not content with the poet on his own terms, in his amazing and scarcely credible reality, his apologists have endowed him with a succession of masks that fit almost every type of spiritual and social ordeal in modern experience. Anyone approaching Rimbaud after half a century of such license and myth-making must share Miss Starkie's feeling that it is time to call a halt to speculation and to recover the poet and his poems in terms as personal and local as possible. To do this can hardly do injustice to his achievement; it will survive the closest identification. His personality and career will always return to the larger dimensions of poetic morality and the feeling will survive that without Rimbaud the tenets of European romanticism would have lacked the sublimation by which they were recreated in contemporary art. To him Keats's sentence on Shakespeare applies with special fitness. He led a life of allegory; his works are the comments on it.

No poet has invited as many incarnations in the private convenience or beliefs of his students or has become so dramatic an index of the aesthetic divergences of our time. Rimbaud himself was fascinated by the notion of avatar and mystic possession. He read Plato, Ballanche, Cabalist texts, and Buddhist scriptures in his search for a tradition that would support his sense of endowment by powers beyond himself. From this sense of divine endow-

^{*}*Arthur Rimbaud*, by Enid Starkie. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. \$3.75.

A Season in Hell, by Arthur Rimbaud. Translated with an Introduction by Delmore Schwartz. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, \$2.50.

Some Poems by Rimbaud. Translated by Lionel Abel. New York: Exiles' Press. 50c.

ment developed his experiments in derangement and hallucination, his wish to create a new order of poetry, his effort to free himself from the confines of his family, his class, his country, from Europe itself. It crystallized in his talk of "becoming God" and in his doctrine of the poet as *voyant*. He is certainly not a poet of fixed and centered intelligence; however far his greatest poetry succeeds in resolving the discordant elements of his genius, we are wiser to refer the problem of unity in his character to psychologists, who should have no difficulty in defining a classic outline behind the pattern of hereditary and childhood influences traced by Miss Starkie. But the important thing for anyone to see who attempts to understand the real nature of Rimbaud's poetic and intellectual development is that he was more than normally conscious of his successive conflicts: of the rigid morality of his childhood with his sexual vagrancy, of his harshly rational mind with mystical illuminism, of his classical schooling with his later aesthetic doctrines, of Christian teaching with private or oriental modes of occult vision, of his precocious misanthropy with his humanitarian passion. He saw the collision between his personality as determined by nature and his identification of himself with the seer who should transcend the limits of soul and body, dissolve the arbitrary forms of European thought, and so release poetry for its highest destiny in the liberation of man. These conflicts were never obscured by the central complexity of his nature. His audacities of conduct and vision were firmly framed within his native equipment of pride, hard-headed industry, and ambition. Until he was fifteen he was a submissive son, a diligent student and prize-winner in the Collège de Charleville, an intelligence of facile energy and brilliance. Once he got to Africa he won, despite the futile outcome of most of his projects there, a reputation as a shrewd trader, bargainer, and judge of men. The intensity and anguish of his sensibility—his compulsion to sufferings that he called "inexpressible" — were lodged in a spirit of baffling toughness.

When Rimbaud's critics simplify or inflate some facet of his genius to the neglect or disparagement of others, they are not so much explaining Rimbaud as diminishing his intelligence. He was not a poet to boast of containing multitudes, but his wit and subtlety of mind were endlessly explorative. They bred and tested him in

an insight that none of the violences of his career was able to brutalize or stultify. When he is used merely as a touchstone to a social, sexual, or exclusively aesthetic argument, there results a shrinking of this insight, a simplification of his powers of criticism and synthesis. His famous sentences then begin to sound ludicrous; his dynamic as a poet is curtailed. His reality as a human being is also diminished. Biographical research, commonly and often justly accused of obscuring the aesthetic virtue of a poet, is likely to have the opposite result with Rimbaud. That is what gives importance, beyond its scrupulous research and well-reasoned interpretation, to Miss Starkie's admirable book, which now supersedes other existing biographies. It is legend, theory, and the inflation of his texts in the manner of a disputed gospel that threaten to make Rimbaud a confusing and unread poet. If one must approach him in terms of parable, it is safer to see him not as the germinal source of every cult or doctrine of our age, but as the culmination of the preceding obsessions of poetic revolt and individualism in Nineteenth Century Europe. However much his abnormal nature as poet and man gives him the force of a test-case in the arguments of Marxist and Freudian critics, Catholic converts, and symbolist or surrealist apologists, he becomes far more convincing if viewed as the Messiah toward whose coming every earlier romantic poet was a signal or a prophet.

The *Rimbaud vivant* of French journalism is the mixed creation of his admirers, and there are signs that this character is becoming popularized abroad, since he is less likely to dispel the symbolic value of the poet who once lived and wrote in all too human body and "tried out the whole century to come in advance." "It is assumed," says Mr. Schwartz, "as with so many others, that his life interprets his poetry. One gets much more illumination by permitting our lives to interpret his text." This holds for any understanding of poetry to some degree, but it holds here with necessary qualifications. Rimbaud's text, in its fullest dimensions, is the true illumination of his genius. In that text there is much that can be recovered, understood, and translated less in terms of *our* lives and prepossessions than through the spiritual and temperamental growth of the child of Charleville. His youthful home, his study of Greek, Latin, and common-school science, his wanderings, the fantastic months in Brussels and London, his humiliating

returns to Charleville, his break with republican Paris, his break with Verlaine, and his five years of obstinate struggle to break with Europe—these phases of Rimbaud's life culminate in his flight to Abyssinia, and each one made its assault on his consciousness of latent powers. In them exists the first gloss on the text of his poems; they remain antecedent to every specialized theory of his conduct or thought.*

The fragmentary appearance and fitful clairvoyance of Rimbaud's pages then begin to take on a more serious unity than is commonly suspected. The fear and anguish of adolescence (*Les Poètes de Sept Ans*) develops into the ironical compassion of his human sympathies (*Les Chercheuses de Poux* and *Les Effarés*). The torrential imagery of *Le Bateau Ivre* indicates an outbreak of consciousness that comes to sudden maturity in *Une Saison en Enfer* and *Les Illuminations*. The large gaps in event and meaning that we find so tempting to fill up with the values and necessities of "our lives" imply a broken but continuously disintegrating and reconstructive impulse by which the poet attempted to arrive at his new conception of social happiness and human destiny and of the part poetry was to play in their attainment. "The new day industrial capitalism, an air in which all that had been holy to European man decayed," played its part in spurring Rimbaud's realization of the impasse at which humanity had arrived, but the air of his own temperament, of his personal obsessions, his social contempt generated by family discord, and his pathologically intensified emotions and insight, existed before and after his encounter with the corruptions of Second Empire and post-Commune

* There is no critical edition of Rimbaud's complete works; the most convenient edition of his poems is the *Oeuvres de Arthur Rimbaud*, including the *Poèmes Retrouvés*, preface by Claudel and annotations by Paterne-Berrichon (Paris: Mercure de France). Mr. Schwartz has now translated *Une Saison en Enfer*. His version shows many sensitive passages but is often at severe odds with Rimbaud's meaning. Fortunately he is now preparing a corrected version, soon to be issued. Some of the difficulties in the present one are indicated by Justin O'Brien in *The Kenyon Review* (Spring, 1940; pp. 229-232). Both Mr. Schwartz's and Mr. Abel's translations exaggerate the *fausse gaucherie* of Rimbaud's style; this results in dissipating its ironic and passionate quality and thus its critical force. When Mr. Abel stays close to Rimbaud's meaning he may be cramped and awkward but makes a fair translation. His versions of *Les Poètes de Sept Ans* and *Le Bateau Ivre* are good guides, and even the untranslatable *Coeur Volé* (*Coeur Supplicié*), though modified out of its real meaning, manages to convey some of the lacerating pathos of the original. Elsewhere Mr. Abel oversimplifies and grows soft in diction, and he has unfortunately omitted the French originals of the poems. One would like to see a straightforward guide-translation prepared for English readers along the lines of Roger Fry's versions of Mallarmé that appeared in 1936.

Paris, and from this he took his strongest energy as a poet. The larger atmosphere of the historical moment came to him later. It helped him realize himself; it did not make him what he was.

For what he was we must go to the whole body of his works, every part of which bears upon the brilliant passages which often suffer the worst mangling in the hands of interpreters and translators. The picturesque Flemish charm of *La Maline*, *Au Cabaret Vert*, *Le Buffet*, and *Les Effarés* embodies the first exhilaration of the enchanted vagabond of *Ma Bohême*, whose sympathy with the poor had not yet arrived at the bitter pathos of the Paris years. The purity of *Rêve pour l'Hiver* expresses an adolescent emotion not yet shocked by the realities which soon overtook it and made it impossible for Rimbaud to retain the lyric simplicity that was Verlaine's enigmatic secret through the years of his worst debauchery. The peasant sympathies of *Le Mal*, *Rages de César*, *Le Dormeur du Val*, and *L'Eclatante Victoire de Saarbroucke*—records of the War of 1870—convey a recognition of human stupidity that tempers and subtilizes the contempt he wrote into his comments on the aftermath of that national humiliation in *Chant de Guerre Parisien*, *Les Accroupissements*, *Les Assis*, *Les Pauvres à l'Eglise*, and *Paris se Repeuple*. They also suggest that *Une Saison en Enfer* must be read with a good deal more realism than is usually brought to it. In the chapter *L'Impossible*, where Rimbaud records his failure in philosophical and religious belief, he recalls childhood as the most precious period in life (he again so describes it in *Les Illuminations*), the age that must be recaptured at all possible costs as the time of instinctive wisdom when God speaks directly to man. But he also sees the delusion of thinking that one can ever go back to it or recapture its innocence, for the innocence never really existed. In a momentary vision of perfect purity he realizes that it is through the spirit alone that man can reach God. The transition from the world of *Ma Bohême* and *Rêve pour l'Hiver* is suddenly revealed as a token of the poet's growth in spiritual maturity. Similarly the idea, in *Les Illuminations*, that the spirit must pass beyond its futile attempts to incarnate itself in concrete images or words which are incapable of containing it wholly, suggests the transition in Rimbaud's thought from a world of physical and practical fixities to one of symbolic words and transcendent values. He forged his way through this transition

in physical terms. His struggle was not only reflected in the violences of his personal life; it is demonstrated in the changing mode and intensity of his poems and it is finally formulated as his aesthetic morality. The state of ecstasy and superhuman bliss suggested by the "spontaneous incoherence" of *Matinée d'Ivresse* is the extension to a metaphysical plane of the lyric happiness of *Ma Bohême*. These signals of growth and maturity are continuous in Rimbaud's poetry. There is an organic emergence of the later thought and emotion from the earlier, and the connection, so little apparent in the surface aspect of the poems, stands out when their subordinate motives and phrases are scrutinized and their specific personal quality is understood.

II.

Rimbaud was not the first example of his type—the demonic angel, the "mystique à l'état sauvage"—in poetic history, but he represented the type in its starkest essentials; one might say in its unmixed and unrationalized essentials if we were not made aware by Miss Starkie's documents that the rebel and mystic in Rimbaud were mixed with the rigor and tenacity of an extremely realistic mind, that he was tortured by an inheritance of moral rectitude and Christian discipline playing against his social vagrancy. Compared with Verlaine's his intelligence was ruthlessly responsible for itself. The religious quality in him, however latent, was harder and more intractable; his contempt for the moral surrender recorded in Verlaine's *Sagesse* is one sign of it. The conflict of his terrifying logic of behavior with Verlaine's pathetic susceptibility was certainly a major cause of the break between the two. Baudelaire had induced Rimbaud to believe in dream as the highest mode of communication between man and the hidden world around him; *Les Illuminations* developed partly from an effort to induce the state of perpetual dreaming through drugs, alcohol, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, and the ensuing dissociation of images and impressions, conveying the vivid manifestations of the hashish sleep, aimed to express the delights of that condition. But Rimbaud confessed his extreme difficulty in achieving "this magic state of receptivity, for he knew that he was still bound by what he considered his besetting inhibition, a consciousness of sin. He was

unable yet to accept everything simply and naturally, for he had not completely uprooted the effects of his early training; and he constantly felt that he was being submitted to temptation and that he was yielding to it. He was not yet able to achieve the instinctive certainty he wished to possess, that he was verily above the reach of sin and condemnation. He knew that only when he had shaken himself free from what seemed to him no more than a foolish inhibition could he achieve full creative power." This conviction struggled in what almost amounted to a death-grip with his inheritance of scruple and conscience. These were stamped upon his sensibility as ineradicably as the obstinacy and pride that were his family's mark of race and station. No flights of fancy, no shows of contempt for bourgeois morality, no assaults on the degenerate society around him, could free him from the whips of self-respect, moral honor, and ambition. And in no poet—not even in Baudelaire—were those whips applied to harsher violations of a man's secret code than they were in Rimbaud. The citadel of his personal integrity was a rock-hewn fortress. High sounds and anathemas issued from it, but the singer of them was never to escape.

He was clearly his mother's son in this side of his nature. The figure of this rigidly austere, repugnant, and pathetic woman hovers over his life. "At no moment of her life had Vitalie Cuif lacked courage and determination." She brought her husband a good dowry and the stolid family virtues of the Ardennes yeoman stock. The handsome captain of the Chasseurs d'Orleans was a fine soldier, a trustworthy officer, and a conscientious administrator, but Vitalie also brought to the marriage her knowledge of how men go wrong. She had seen her two brothers go to the dogs; the unstable element in Rimbaud, usually attributed to his father, has been shown by Godchot to stem from the erratic sons of the strict Cuif household. She was to see her husband desert his home to escape from her eternal vigilance and wrangling. Her elder son degenerated into laziness, vagrancy, and failure. Her silent ambitions, her passion for social prestige and rectitude, were concentrated on the second son, in whom she instinctively discovered (despite her uneasy disapproval of his literary passions) the brilliant mind and tenacious spirit that meant for her the redemption of family honor and fortune. She was the first person who seized upon Rimbaud in the character for which he was later to become

famous. To her he was the redeeming child, the adolescent whose solid virtues and easy successes as a student were lit by the tenacious force, now become articulate, that possessed her own secret soul.

In Miss Starkie's early chapters one sees the searchlight of history playing on Mme. Rimbaud's figure, immortalizing her in a role she little dreamed of. She is the mother of *Les Poètes de Sept Ans*, supervising the evening studies of her children, unaware of "what revolt lay smouldering in the little boy who looked up at her out of such innocent blue eyes"; cutting and sewing her children's clothes long after they had out-grown childish measurements; standing outside the schoolhouse door to lead her sons back home and so keep them from trancies that meant for her only one thing—a sure pathway to the devil. It was the same woman who, years later, took her son back into her house when he returned, time after time, in rags and diseased, from Paris, London, Brussels, Hamburg, Italy, Alexandria, from remote Java where he had gone to enlist in the Dutch Army, and from Abyssinia. There seems to have been no open accusation of the terrible disappointment he had meted out to her. The son and mother never needed words to be aware of what they were thinking and feeling. On the morning his body was brought back to Charleville from the hospital in Marseilles she ordered a funeral *de première classe*, in the most triumphant bourgeois taste, at the short notice of two hours. Ten years later she refused to step sixty feet from her door to see the statue raised in his memory by the citizens of the town. It is said she never saw it in her remaining lifetime. When she had the bodies of Arthur and her daughter Vitalie moved to a new grave in 1900, she helped the workmen transfer the coffins and herself stooped to gather up in a white cloth the crumbling bones and soft hair of her little girl. She had done her best and her worst to raise her fatherless children. Isabelle alone remained to her, and the last words we hear from the mother were the scrupulous enquiries she made of Delahaye, long after Arthur's death, about the desirability of Patern-Berrichon as a husband for the girl. Delahaye was reassuring, but when he received Mme. Rimbaud's New Year greeting-card a year after the marriage that left her finally alone and deserted in her house, she appended to her name a single word: "Desolée."

The secret ambition and defeats of Mme. Rimbaud are unmistakably the beginning of her son's conflict with the world, and perhaps the source of his poetic animus. Many of the central passages in his works take their force from his resistance to the strictures of her morality. "The poet makes himself a visionary through a long, immense, and reasoned derangement of all the senses. . . . He exhausts all poisons in himself to keep only their quintessences. An indescribable torture in which he has need of all faith, all superhuman force, in which he becomes, among all, the great sick man, the great criminal, the great accursed—and the supreme Scholar!—for he arrives at the unknown; and even if, driven insane, he should end by losing his grasp on his visions, he has seen them. . . . Even as a child I used to admire the incorrigible convict on whom the jail is always closing again. . . . He had for me more strength than a saint, more good sense than a traveller—and himself, himself alone! for witness of his glory and his reason." The rebellion to imposed morality in these railleries originated in the intense duel of wills that is defined in *Les Poètes de Sept Ans*, that forms the exquisite tension of *Une Saison en Enfer*, and that Rimbaud shared subconsciously throughout his life with the inflexible woman of Charleville.

From the confines of his youthful home Rimbaud stepped forth to his progressive rebellions against the world—against "the inferior race [that] has covered everything—the people, as we say, Reason, the Nation, and Science." These became what Mr. Schwartz says of them—the poisoned atmosphere of industrialized capitalism. But the poison that Rimbaud breathed first and last was something so profoundly integral to his psychic constitution and conscience that the taste of it made even the pollution of Paris seem by comparison superficial. Rimbaud saw his age's humiliations and he noted them with the accuracy of the naturalists in *Paris se Repeuple*, *Nuit de l'Enfer*, and *L'Eclair*. But his sense of evil and human shame was rooted in his moral nature, and in the abnormalities of emotion and conduct that caused that nature to become inflamed and luminous. His biography tends to lessen the isolated importance of his successive encounters with fact. His four brief years in Paris become a crucial episode; his railleries against church, state, army, town, and friends, whether in the cafés of Charleville or the lobbies of Paris theatres, become part of a

drama of unsparing and obscene immolation—his answer to the smug compromises and makeshift security which he soon discovered most living to be composed of.

In this role of the artist as insulter of domestic sanctities and moral privileges, as a disputant before the bar of justice, Rimbaud takes on his radical force. This power Miss Starkie makes credible and human because she shows it rooted in the rebel's and outcast's hunger for normal human affections and recognition. She doubtless goes too far in her apology when she minimizes Rimbaud's cruelties and sins. These were not alone the methods of proof ("purification") of an obsessive neurotic. They were what they always are when other human beings are involved: acts of nightmarish delight in the infliction of pain, in the humiliation of friends, in effrontery and reckless ingratitude. Rimbaud ceases to be humanly or morally significant if they are regarded as anything else. But they are offset by what is now apparent in his nature and heredity—by qualities of sensibility that made him not only a lyric poet of extraordinary power but a man of intensely pathetic weaknesses and strength; a man too of secret griefs who saw the misery of the Paris slums with a deeper anguish and heroism than that of Malte Laurids Brigge, a renegade who faced consequences without fear and whose long term in the lidless hell of Africa was alleviated by his knowledge of the misery of his fellow-sufferers there, by his devotion to his servants, by his delicate care for his two mistresses, and by acts of kindness that are remembered among the citizens of Harar to this day.

It was not a season he spent in Hell but a lifetime. The Nineteenth Century offers many tragedies of genius, but those of Keats, Heine, Hölderlin, Thomson, and Leopardi pale when compared with the extremities of Rimbaud's suffering. His life was pitilessly sacrificed to a hostile environment, to desperate privations, and to waste. For when Rimbaud broke with his moral foundations he broke without sparing himself any of the consequences. The shock of his encounter with human depravity in the Paris barracks (*Coeur Supplicié*) acted on his tormented sensibility as an abrupt dissolution of every ethical and moral legality in which he had been bred. When he put his soul to the rack he committed the worst affront to decency of which he was capable, but he expected no flattering comfort from the ordeal and looked for no

facile absolution either from his own conscience or from his fellow-men. His refusal of easy grace was as rigid as that of Léon Bloy, and he shared Bloy's contempt for the vicarious modes of Purgatory with which most modern poets are satisfied. His sufferings after the flight from Paris could not, within the bounds of sanity, have been as deliberately chosen as his vices were, but their extremities raise his career to a level of appalling magnificence. The scenes in London and Paris with Verlaine show a squalor which none of the lyric beauties that grew out of them or the exalted lines of *Délires* can dispel. But as we read of the five years of homeless wandering by the outcast — "l'homme aux semelles de vent" — between his departure from Paris at nineteen and his first entry into Africa; as we see that interval reaching its climax in his climb on foot across the Alps in a violent snowstorm, coatless, hatless, through beating hailstones and a savage wind, along sheer precipices and through blizzards that froze his hair and beard, we are left astounded by the ruthlessness of a destiny that few men of any kind have been able to survive.

In Rimbaud the forging of poetry was identical with the forging of his spirit. His tragedy as a poet lies in the fact that the conflict of elements in his nature exceeded those delicate and precarious antitheses which must be held in balance if genius is to rise articulate from its agony. The forging had to continue beyond the point where the metal of poetic intelligence receives its temper. The whole nature of the man demanded the fire. The poet, as Mr. Abel says, suffered a fatal distempering, "a regression from the civilized to the primitive, from poetry to prose, from prose to silence." By the time Rimbaud died, seventeen years after his abandonment of poetry, he had not only shown how unsparing is the ordeal by which a man becomes the fit and conscious host of the poet within him, but to what a tragedy of waste and violence that ordeal, driven to excess by logic and instability, can lead.

III.

The surface values of Rimbaud's verse are not difficult to read, but because they are too often read as values of mere shock and derangement they are easily reduced to the empty eloquence and vitiating abstractness of thought that have made his influence

one of the worst in modern poetry. This influence, as commonly understood, becomes an affair of sentimental and mystical pretensions and of a verbal recklessness that completely dispels the primary virtue of his art. That virtue is rooted in the rigor of his moral realism, in his lacerating study of selfhood and all that its mastery requires, and in the fact that to achieve a unity of his moral and poetic natures, he spared himself nothing. His radical criticism of the popular poets of Hugo's generation was that they had vision without realization: "La culture de leurs âmes s'est commencée aux accidents." "Musset, tenfold loathsome to a suffering generation like ours, carried away by visions of higher things which his angelic sloth only insults. Oh! these mawkish *Comédies et Proverbes*! Oh! the *Nuits*! . . . Oh! Musset! Charming his love, isn't it? That painting on enamel, what solid poetry! . . . Musset was able to achieve nothing! There were visions behind the veil that hid them, but he only closed his eyes." When Rimbaud found his first great literary passion in the work of Baudelaire, he found an aesthetic that came as a revelation of the true unity and totality of poetry and of its future in enlarging the vision and experience of man. The doctrine of correspondences, with its promise of godhead in the form of the complete poetic vision, came as the charter of a new age of truth. But it came in the work of a poet who brought the theoretic statement of the unity of art as found in Schopenhauer or Ballanche out of abstraction into the realism of the lyric experience. Baudelaire was for Rimbaud the first of the poets whose art seems "to be a complete picture of life in all its complexities, in which the highest mingles with the lowest, aspirations with failures . . . flesh and spirit, dream and nightmare all at once." He was the poet above all others of modern Europe who had a sense of the form that poetic realization must take if it is to subsume the full experience and consciousness of man. Baudelaire was the one poet in whom Rimbaud found a dramatization of moral reality and creative ordeal:

Plonger au fond du gouffre, Enfer ou Ciel qu'importe?

Au fond de l'inconnu pour trouver du nouveau.

Rimbaud followed Baudelaire faithfully up to the moral crisis in his poems, the moment where Baudelaire saw that the reckless indulgence of sense and its consequence dissolution of man's standards of moral judgment meant a diminution and even a com-

plete disintegration of human consciousness. At that point he rejected the *Paradis Artificiels* of the hallucinated intelligence; "it is in this moral conclusion that Baudelaire's real meaning is to be found and it is he himself who calls it moral." Facing in self-induced hallucination and derangement the implications of suicide, Baudelaire was thrown back on his humanity, his personal identity, the tragic conflict of his instinctive and intelligent natures. In that conflict and in the tension it imposed on his sensibility lies the specific force of his poetry. Rimbaud broke with Baudelaire in refusing to accept the conditions of human life. They must be altered. The derangement of the senses must be complete and systematic. The dissolution of conceptual reality must be as thoroughgoing as is the dissolution of sensory impressions through the correspondences and associations set up by poetic imagination. The poet as *voyant* must become the true seer, the godhead of essences.

This was Rimbaud at the outset of his career, at the threshold of Paris and at the age of fifteen. Within five years he was to learn why Baudelaire was thrown back on his conscious existence as a man, on his inescapable moral identity. The learning took so intense a form of reaction and disgust that it deprived him of the will to write, and his career as poet broke off at the age of twenty. He is a lesser poet than Baudelaire by the degree to which he delayed and finally evaded the integration of his moral nature with his creative vision. He had once written to Izambard and Démeny that "the final apotheosis of the poet would be reached only when he had acquired full knowledge of himself, of all his faculties and how best to use them"; when, too, he would realize that "he has charge of humanity" and must make his visions known to others. When he said that he had not yet learned how relentless are the claims of selfhood and of human service.

Rimbaud is the sworn enemy of sham, meanness, and every dishonesty that enslaves the dignity and vision of man, but this is not to say that the critic in him coincides with the poet or that his animus is essentially that of a critical intelligence. He would have been a dull creature had he remained blind to the impotence and brutality of his century. It hardly took a great poet to see and anathematize these. The Nineteenth Century poets had a great stock of popular sentiment and theological approval to draw on for support. Hugo and Swinburne had certain acceptable convictions in

this line, but these indignations served them very slightly in strengthening or intensifying their poetic gifts. Today the indignation of social revolutionists and humanitarian poets has a similar means of success: it takes the tragedy of society, views it in its full horror of chaos and bloodthirsty anarchy, and glibly refers the problem to the abstract judgment of a social or moral theory. The whole central ground and condition of poetry—its source in private integrity and responsibility—is evaded. The large language of doctrine is set against the desperate and baffling nightmare of modern life. The two remain unanalyzed and unreconciled, and as a consequence most poetry and most social evangelism remain empty of value.

Rimbaud comes in conveniently here as a model. His imitators have become legion since 1918 and something like a public nuisance during the past decade. These self-appointed spokesmen of a new age of disillusion and cataclysm have almost succeeded in dragging his example and value down to the level of abuse and misunderstanding where they were relegated by academicians and humanist critics half a century ago. He is drawn on alternately for visionary prophecy and for Isaiahan thunders, and though he figures in the shaping of several authentic talents in our time, he is one of the most misleading of influences—misleading because he is badly read and superficially known in his fundamental quality. Hart Crane obviously brought both a high creative zeal and a strong personal recognition to his study of Rimbaud, and he made something of his example, but elsewhere Rimbaud's intensity of mind and sensibility has been vulgarized until what remains is chiefly the spectacular defiance and moral shock of his surfaces. He has been reduced either to crude diabolism or to a frantic effort to recover the spiritual meaning and energy of life from encroaching ruin. His images of search and conflict have been tumbled into meaningless avalanches of sound and sense. His influence appears to have been steadily attenuated: from the work of Salmon to that of Claudel, from Perse to MacLeish, from Crane to Prokosch, from Eluard and the more gifted *surréalistes* to Aragon or Dylan Thomas, from Auden to Spender to Kenneth Patchen to (finally, let us hope) Oscar Williams. It is a progress in disorganization, in accepting the fact of unrest and dissolution as the matter of poetry, in substituting the distress and irresponsibility of the mod-

ern world for the active intelligence of poetic insight, and so in retreating to the language of prophetic arrogance and hollow judgments instead of attacking the true reality of words and experience as Rimbaud hoped to create it.

To live a life like Rimbaud's and to reach the vindication he arrived at means to have his capacities for self-knowledge, truth, and endurance. To write poetry like his implies an ability to face the full truth and responsibilities of such poetry, and to combine that truth with the excitement of a new vision. It was to this responsibility that Rimbaud's *bateau ivre* returned him: "L'automne, notre barque élevée dans les brumes immobiles tourne vers le port de la misère, la cité énorme au ciel taché de feu et de boue." He refused to accept the humiliation of reconciling his sublime vision of human destiny with this *vraie vie*; a fiercer humility lay in wait for him, but outside poetry. The task of completing his work has fallen on his descendants, and only when they begin to attack it with the rigor and fearlessness of Rimbaud's character will they escape the waste and silence that overtook him and so realize the high claims he made for the future of poetry and of mankind.

FEBRUARY 1938

The cruel background of the European
peace; and the foreground of Virginia's
dissatisfaction with our day by day;
and I as I am: oh, the dismay of this
experience here now! to almost, almost
lust for rage, separation, and destruction,
the universal war at last, and wreck
of many a surety at one swipe.—
But I'll begin with me and slowly bend
my habits on the pattern of the best:
on no near thought; and with Virginia
tonight resolve to inform the future;
and as I can, with private good my strength,
a little, help preserve the Western World.
—But as I came to this assuery,
here was Virginia home and wildly
drunk, and when I tried to kiss her cried
'Let me go! let me go! let me go!'

PAUL GOODMAN

The Wolf, The Muskrat, and The Crow

Reuel Denney

WHEN THEY HAD THUMBED over all the sample bolts of cloth, Mr. Ginsberg looked out the window toward the rooftops of the other lofts and lighted his cigar. He could see the shine of the towers as far as the fifties and farther in the haze a shadowy Queensborough Bridge.

"What do you think of them now Sam?" he asked.

Sam Feinman shook his head from side to side.

"I guess you got me this time Adolph. Where's your order-book?"

"That's the way I like to hear you talk, Sam. You'll never be sorry you got into this here line."

When Feinman had finished giving his order, Adolph Ginsberg lighted his cigar for him.

"How are the kids, Sam?"

"Fine. Donald is getting the best marks in his class all the way through. And Rose is getting so good on that violin—you should hear her."

"And Etta?"

"Oh, you know. All right. Etta's always all right. She only just worries about the kids. How is Seymour getting along? He must be big now, huh?"

"You mean the Wildcat?" asked Adolph Ginsberg.

"Huh?" said Feinman. "The Wildcat?"

"That's right," said Ginsberg. He leaned across the desk and shook his finger at the manufacturer.

"Say, listen Sam. The kids these days, they're smart all right. Imagination!" he cried, tapping his forehead. "You wouldn't know what they think of. Now this wildcat business for instance. Last month Seymour and some of his friends from School 67 come over and I hear them talking. They call Seymour 'Wildcat,' so he calls the other boys by 'Bear' or other wild animals like that. Then they

go out in the yard—you know I got a nice big place there Sam—and when I come out what are they doing? . . . Making a fire!”

“Now that doesn’t sound like anything, does it? But wait a minute! With matches? No. They’re making that fire with a piece of stone and a knife just like the Indians, or Dan Crockett or one of those leatherstocking fellers. Why Sam, they got a club and they call it the Totem Tribe—with nice boys for members. Elias Lieberman, his father’s in furs. And Joe Blume and some others. They talk indian and have rules and go out in the park for hikes.”

“Say!” said Feinman.

“Its a great thing for the boys. Their law is: draw a straight arrow and tell the truth and live by the way of the woods. Now Sam think of the educational value of that. So I gave them the cellar to use and had a room fixed up for them down there. So they call it the Council Lodge and have a museum down there and everything. You wouldn’t think a bunch of kids out there in the Bronx would have the imagination would you?”

“That’s a great kid you got there, Ad,” said Feinman.

“Well I wouldn’t doubt he was behind it all. He knows something. So I try to help them all I can. Right off, get this, they elect me Grand Sachem and I am supposed to be their counsellor and all that! Get that! Say!”

“Well its a great thing if kids will make use of their chances and their advantages, Adolph. We never had that chance.”

“Right, Sam. Well its great to see them. When I come to their meeting they all get up together and say ‘Tonka Kewoo Mr. Ginsberg.’ That means ‘The honored counsellor is welcome to our campfire.’ ”

“Ya gotta hand it to them,” said Feinman. “Ya certainly do.”

Seymour Ginsberg watched his fathers adam’s apple go up and down with the ice-cream, then went downstairs into the council room to wait until the Tribe had gathered for the meeting. He looked into the glasscovered shoebox which displayed the arrowheads that the Muskrat had found on a farm one summer and had given to the Tribe. There was one of quartz. It was brownly stained: was that dark spot blood? Seymour sat down in the big Sachem’s chair and putting his right elbow on the arm of the chair he leaned back and rested his chin in his hand. This was the night it was his turn to be Sachem.

The blockhouse seemed to him to stand in a little open place in the forest.

On one wall of the Ginsberg's cellar room there was an old peacepipe that one of the members had brought, and there was a totem-pole that the Wolf had carved out of a pine stick with a razor blade: it was painted with tubes of color he had found in the five and ten. The benches of the room were ranged in a circle around the bricks and stones that made a fireplace that was filled with sticks of wood for fuel and red paper for flames.

Around the blockhouse now all is in silence for they are through with supper dishes in the room above the cellar and it seems quiet as the woods of a midsummer day. Except that a bird calls very faintly through the underwood. And Uncas, the good Indian, is lying on his belly in the grass, looking toward the fort. He sees the bayonet and the red hat of the British sentry passing, repassing along the upper edge of the stockade. Uncas lies quite still. As he waits there he chews a little pemmican (or dried Buffalo meat) out of a leather pouch tied to his belt. He is naked but for a loincloth and the teeth of a wildcat he wears around his neck as a charm. Then suddenly a column of smoke appears on the hill behind the fort. Then another. A third. The three smokes stand up straight in the stillness. Uncas creeps back into the brush and whistles softly almost like the bird, to the thousand braves who are waiting (they are as many as the leaves on the trees, sire, or the sands of the shore) and to the Americans who are concealed there.

With a yell they all leap forward. The fort is in arms, but it is too late. Uncas and his braves swarm over the stockade with ladders especially prepared of strong vines. The sentries raise their muskets but the long knives part their throats. In the parade the redcoat captain falls, grasping at the lace around his neck.

"We have won the day," cried Uncas in broken English, jumping down from the Sachem's chair and waving over his head a broomstick.

Seymour struck the broomstick sharply against the concrete floor of the empty room. "I am Uncas, known also as the Wilcat," he announced. "And all these men will do my bidding."

He heard the doorbell then, and he went upstairs to let the Wolf and the Crow in. And when the Muskrat had joined them, they opened the meeting with the singing of a Sioux war song. The

Wildcat had written the words on pieces of notebook paper and handed them around. And when they were finished singing, the Muskrat asked for the floor in much the same way that one had to ask for the floor in Miss Hogan's class when they went through the Civics hour in parliamentary order; and he asked the Wildcat where he had found that song.

"In a library book," said the Wildcat.

"I think we all owe a vote of thanks to the Wildcat for finding that song," said Muskrat. They gave it unanimously.

"Now," said the Wildcat. "How about the report on that hike that the Muskrat and the Crow took?"

The Crow was a gentile who had lived in the Adirondacks for two years, and he was considered an authority on trees. He read his report, mentioning elm, beech, gum, locust, ginko, alanthus, birch, sassafras and flowering thorn.

"You forgot Pine and Cedar," said the Muskrat.

"Oh yeh. Pine and Cedar."

"And we had our lunches with us," said the Muskrat. "I had an orange and a salami sandwich and some tea in a thermos bottle. And he had a roast beef sandwich and some milk, ha ha, and some cake we bought at the A and P. We had a great time."

"We'll have to mark it down with the date," said the Wildcat—or the Sachem,—or Uncas the good Indian,—or Seymour Ginsberg. "Crow, you are the Scribe: mark down Van Cortlandt Park on our hike-stick."

But a little later they heard the heavy steps of the Grand Sachem on the stairs.

"Nuts," whispered the Wolf to the Crow. "It's his old man. Jeeze, lookit how he's fixed up."

Mr. Ginsberg's arms were folded akimbo and he came downstairs slowly: he had three feathers tied upright in back of his head and his belly looked larger than ever.

"Well, boys," he said. "How's things?"

"Oh pretty good, Mr. Ginsberg," said the Wolf.

The Grand Sachem frowned.

"Stand up and lay off that Ginsberg stuff," whispered the Muskrat to the Wolf. "Remember: Tonka Kewoo."

The Wolf was a bit slow in standing and so was the Crow, but when they were all up they cried in unison: "Tonka Kewoo! Tonka Kewoo!"

Mr. Ginsberg smiled then.

"Now when you are finished, boys," he said. "There is cake and ginger ale for you upstairs. Then, tomorrow, if you want to go, there will be a trip to the beach."

The Wildcat smiled.

"Well, what do you think boys?" asked the Grand Sachem.

"Why fine," said the Crow.

"OK," said the Muskrat.

And the Wolf agreed.

Then when the Grand Sachem had gone back to his newspaper the Tribe had a fire-lighting contest, with flint and steel and with bow and spindle. The Crow lit a nest of tinder with flint and a knife but no one had any success with the bow and drill.

The meeting was closed with the singing of another song, and when it was over they went their different directions from Seymour's house: the Crow and the Wolf striding off together for a soda at the Sugar Bowl.

Eddie the soda-jerker waved to them from behind the taps as they went in toward a booth, and when he came to get their order he said to the Wolf:

"Ya look pretty smooth, Morrie! You and Hutchins here been out datin' the women I suppose."

"One chocolate soda," said the Wolf. "Maybe we have been datin' them and maybe not."

"I'll have a chocolate, too," said the Crow.

"What are their names?" Eddie asked as he went away from them.

"I guess he must think we're in high school already," the Wolf said to the Crow.

"Well we will be next year."

"Say I'm going to get long pants next week," said the Wolf.

"So am I."

"Yeah I'm going to get them next week: my uncle is a tailor."

"Well what did you think of the meeting?"

The Wolf frowned.

"Tonka Kewoo Mr. Ginsberg," the Crow said suddenly. They both pounded the table with their fists, laughing and laughing.

"Are you taking a tepee to the beach?" asked the Wolf.

"Yeh. And enough wampum to get hotdogs."

It was very strange: only a week before the words "Tonka Kewoo" had pictured to them an Indian rider silhouetted against sunset on some hill. Now they only made them think of Mr. Ginsberg's gut.

.
The next evening the two of them were stretched out in the grass behind the Wolf's house, and looking down the yards for a long distance, they could see that all the houses were the same. But the grass smelled sweetly and the night was warm. They whistled, dug their fingers in the soft earth, pointed out to each other the North Star and the Large and Small Dippers. But they could not keep still. Sometimes they would put their heads down on their folded arms before them and sometimes they turned over and lay on their backs: their legs felt long and restless: their arms were not satisfied in any position: their fingers folded and unfolded themselves.

They heard the back door of the house next to them open and close: a girl stood on the porch for a few seconds and then stepped down into the yard.

"She goes to high school," said the Wolf.

The girl was dressed whitely for summer in a short sleeveless dress; they could see her through the pickets of the fence as she turned round in the yard uncertainly and as she sat down on a bench near the driveway under a small tree. The light was dim but they could see her clearly among the shadows: they could see the bare legs and knees and the shape of her arms and shoulders, and even heard, when the traffic sounds diminished, the quick intake of her breath. They lay quite still. She rose after a while to come over to the fence and lean on it looking up, but while she did not see them, they saw the muscles of her legs and the whiteness of her ankles in the grass. Then she turned abruptly and went back into the house again.

"Her name is Josephine," said the Wolf. "She goes to a lot of dances."

"I gotta learn to dance," murmured the Crow.

"Yeh."

"I can go on Wednesday nights to a class a friend of my sister's has," went on the Crow.

"That's when the Tribe meets," answered the Wolf slowly.

"Well. . . I don't think I'll go there anymore."

"No?"

"No."

That negative seemed to both of them to be a turning point, like a battle that marks the beginning of the end of a war.

"I don't think I will either," cried the Wolf. "Shake!"

They pressed hands warmly until they discovered that they had given the Tribal Secret Handshake to each other: at that they drew their hands away as if they had both touched an unexpected lizard in each other's palm. They shook all over again with a plain handclasp.

"We're too old for that crap," said the Crow. "It's all a fake. Besides, old Ginsberg drives me nuts. And a fire with red paper for flames! Its all a fake."

"He's an awful pain, Ginsberg. Seymour too sometimes," said the Wolf. "Tonka Kewoo!"

They screamed and chuckled, punching each other.

"Its no good," said the Wolf. "We ought to go and bust it all up. Most of it is our stuff anyway."

"And paint it up with that red paint there!" yelled the Crow.

"Yeh! Its kid stuff!"

They jumped up and raced crazily out into the street and down toward Ginsberg's. The cellar-door was unlocked; they ran down into the Council Room and knocked peacepipe and totem to the floor, where they stamped them to bits. The Wolf opened the red paint and smeared it all over the walls: they turned over the benches and tore the Sachem's chair apart.

"Tonka Kewoo," the Wolf cried. "The Iroquois have come!"

When they were done they climbed out into the nighttime again undetected, and staggered wearily down the street half in laughter and half in tears. They had done nothing but break a few things, but when they stood again in front of the Wolf's house they were weak and trembling as after a fever. But this is the way converts feel when they have just burned the images that last year they supplicated with wheat and with animals: this is the way the young Cheyenne felt when he spent the night of his thirteenth birthday alone in the mountains waiting for the voices of spirits that the grown men knew.

Ivan Goll

JEAN SANS TERRE TRAVERSE L'ATLANTIQUE

Enfin de moi se détache la Terre
De tant de terreurs et d'enterrements
L'Europe prend le voile de poussière
Le dernier cap n'est plus qu'un ossement

Et plus personne sur la plage antique
Ne va chercher les étoiles d'amour
Les kursaals d'or et les vaines boutiques
Du sentiment ont fermé pour toujours

Putain de mer aux dentelles d'écume
Pourquoi m'attires-tu sur tes divans
Que je m'enfonce dans tes draps de brume
Et m'abandonne la tête en avant?

Dans tes jardins parfumés à l'iode
Tu guettes quelque pâle matelot
Qui dans tes bras clapotants d'émeraudes
Réveillerait les vieux frissons de l'eau

Les noyés nus qui n'ont plus de narines
Et que traverse déjà l'esturgeon
L'entraille frétille de sardines
Viennent t'aimer au fond de tes donjons

Moi capitaine de tes hippocampes
Je saurai le secret de tes déserts
Partout je plante ma forêt de hampes
Je dors tranquille sur ton dos pervers

Certaine nuit tes odeurs de saumure
Et le rêve chimique de tes fonds
Essaient de déboulonner mon armure
Et me proposent ton baiser profond

Translated by Clark Mills and Ivan Goll

JOHN LANDLESS CROSSES THE ATLANTIC

At last it fails and drops away in dust
This land of so much fear and fallen stone
Old Europe's pantheons are but a crust
A nameless cape a ragged heap of bone

And now no longer on the antique shores
Will one pursue the stars of love he lost
The golden kursaals and the useless stores
Of sentiment are permanently closed

O sea-whore: garmented in lace of foam
Why do you draw me outward towards your bed
That velvet-bolstered ever open tomb
Where coral grows that coldest blood has fed?

Within your gardens rich with iodine
Longing you look for any clumsy mate
Who drunken with your salty emerald-vine
Might waken the old shudders you await

The naked drowned who plunge to your demesnes
And through whose breasts the silver sturgeons swim
Their guts alive and wriggling with sardines
Come down to love you winged like cherubim

I captain of your sea-horse squadron will
Command your passions and your secret dreams
I plant my masts on every waving hill
And slumber calmly on your nervous streams

In vain you call me with your glittering face
And with the chemical power of your eyes
My bolted armor balks your false embrace
My ears are sealed against your drunken sighs

Regrettes-tu les rouges Salamine?
Les étendards de feu des Armadas?
Amoureuse d'amiraux bleu-marine
Toujours friande d'un nouveau repas

Voici des bateaux montés du Tartare
Pleins de vivants dont la mort avorta
Qui t'apportent leur poussière et leur tare
Le tétanos de terre à Thalatta

Plus accablés que jadis les Atrides
Fuyant la haine dure des rochers
Ils viennent dans tes précipices vides
Et dans tes trous de sel pour se cacher

Ils sont la vérole Ils sont la chimère
Ils sont la peste car ils sont l'esprit
Et vomis par la malveillante terre
Parce qu'ils ont trop aimé trop compris

Ils ont quitté les rives rancunières
Où les caps ont des regards trop humains
Ils préfèrent tes bouillantes colères
Et le néant où mènent tes chemins

J'ai vu leurs sceptres J'ai vu leurs béquilles
J'ai vu leurs rêves J'ai vu leurs sueurs
J'ai vu la moisson morte de leurs filles
Et leurs vieillards amincis par la peur

Ils viennent tous à toi les Gens sans Terre
Qui n'ont plus un brin d'herbe ou de cerfeuil
Plus une armoire plus une prière
Plus même le sapin pour leur cercueil

Accueille bien ces débris de la terre
Renonce un instant à tes fiers amants
Mer écarlate berce la misère
Des continents qui sombrent lentement

Do you regret the feast of Salamis?
The red banquet at the Armada's blast?
Blue admirals fond of your precipice
Are always sinking for a new repast

But see the oozy leaking hulls that teem
With passengers escaped from Tartarus
Sickened they bear as if they would blaspheme
To Thalatta the earthy tetanus

More bent and bowed than the Atridae ever
Fleeing the stolid hatred of the cliffs
Abjuring all their faith and their endeavor
They seek the ocean's vaulted caves and drifts

They are the black pox they are the chimera
They are the plague because they are the mind
And they are vomited by the bitter era
Because they are too wise and too resigned

They left the coast-line of the sunken ages
Where the stone profiles are concealed by weed
They seek by preference your boiling rages
The nothingness to which your highways lead

I weighed their scepters and I took their crutches
I knew their nightmares and I saw their sweat
I felt their daughters' mortifying touches
And their thin patriarchs' lingering heat

Adopt and comfort all this landless host
Who own no sprig of thyme nor leaf of cress
Nor trunk nor stove nor lark nor cloud nor ghost
Nor even the small tree of loneliness

O welcome all this flotsam of the lands
Ocean: forget your prouder lovers' kiss
And be with all your waves your arms your hands
The errants' anxious mother and abyss

A Note on Jean Sans Terre

Louise Bogan

IN PRE-ROMANTIC PERIODS, man is nothing; it is his terrors that count. Poetry's long stay in the region of pre-Romanticism is the oddest phenomenon in the literature of our day. The Dada and Surrealist schools were both pre-Romantic, and Surrealism announced itself as an end, refusing to look forward to any further development beyond itself. The poets of Surrealism remained singularly naïve concerning the atmosphere they created, and considered themselves "new,"—without forerunners or historic exemplars. It is becoming clear, however, that in Surrealism—its delight in the horror-weighted scene, the dark region, and the grisly feticch—the whole *macabre* of pre-Romantic Gothic has made another appearance. The haunted silent squares and arcades of Chirico, rather than the haunted castle of Radcliffe, set the stage. And the "subconscious" imagery of surrealist poetry corresponds to the subconscious imagery of Blake, Young and Poe. In both periods, as an escape from harsh reality, poetry recedes back to the play and primitive terrors of the savage and the child.

In Ivan Goll's *Jean Sans Terre* an actual Romantic spirit and feeling reappears. The secularized Flesh and Devil have been surpassed and passed beyond. Now actual Nature comes back for applause. The stage sets, the underground corridors, the deserted public squares with their frozen shadows, the blank shores with empty horizons, yield to recognizable landscapes. And emotion, no longer disguised and transformed, returns freshly and without shame; and can be applied directly to the earth, the sun and the moon, to animals and flowers, and to man. Although the atmosphere of displacement, of nostalgia, is still very strong, man is released from full helplessness before the childish dream. He is no longer completely at the mercy of events. He is freed of the full burden of his situation, because he is now free to apply to it both irony and love.

This is the Romantic spirit at its best, and in Ivan Goll's *Jean Sans Terre*, it is always evident. The poet creates, as well, in the best Romantic tradition, a myth which will accommodate all the capabilities of a sensitive and complex observer. The Romantic character often embodies itself in some one figure (such as the Byronic Don Juan and Childe Harold); or in two complementary figures (Faust-Mephisto). *Jean Sans Terre* is such a romantic embodiment. The modern mythical personage, however, is never a "hero." The "I" has been subdued; the action becomes more

metaphysical than physical; the "adventures" are more the movements of the spirit than of the body.

The poet looks upon a world, which, it is true, presents all the characteristics of the nightmare. But he is not for a moment subdued or taken in by it. *Jean Sans Terre* becomes a picture of the man, equipped with the most modern sensitiveness, thrown into a world in which there are no values and little love; where suspicion and hatred come more easily than understanding and tolerance; where the nonconforming individual can find no place; where materialism will yield only to forces as limited, brutal and harsh as itself. Ivan Goll has created a character which combines mediaeval mysticism with an observation modern in the extreme. The two faculties are applied to all aspects of our times. Jean Sans Terre explores the modern city, as well as the eternal relationship between man and woman, between dream and the dreamer, between "God" and the pitiable human machine, made of dust but housing the idea of the universe.

Jean Sans Terre, in the three volumes already published in France, is epically conceived. M. Goll has not, however, burdened his conception with epic treatment. He comes before us, this John Landless, presented by a lyric poet: a lyricist skilled in special effects of technique and language. M. Goll has been able to use the brilliant surrealist vocabulary, while charging and weighting it in a manner unknown to surrealism. He has gone beyond Apollinaire in making the "popular" form serve as vehicle for philosophical and metaphysical ideas. He has perfected an instrument which, at first glance, seems slight; and has given it, by a dazzling mastery over effects, true depth and range.

Towards a Newer Laocoon

Clement Greenberg

THE DOGMATISM and intransigence of the “non-objective” or “abstract” purists of painting today cannot be dismissed as symptoms merely of a cultist attitude towards art. Purists make extravagant claims for art, because usually they value it much more than any one else does. For the same reason they are much more solicitous about it. A great deal of purism is the translation of an extreme solicitude, an anxiousness as to the fate of art, a concern for its identity. We must respect this. When the purist insists upon excluding “literature” and subject matter from plastic art, now and in the future, the most we can charge him with off-hand is an unhistorical attitude. It is quite easy to show that abstract art like every other cultural phenomenon reflects the social and other circumstances of the age in which its creators live, and that there is nothing inside art itself, disconnected from history, which compels it to go in one direction or another. But it is not so easy to reject the purist’s assertion that the best of contemporary plastic art is abstract. Here the purist does not have to support his position with metaphysical pretensions. And when he insists on doing so, those of us who admit the merits of abstract art without accepting its claims in full must offer our own explanation for its present supremacy.

Discussion as to purity in art and, bound up with it, the attempts to establish the differences between the various arts are not idle. There has been, is, and will be, such a thing as a confusion of the arts. From the point of view of the artist engrossed in the problems of his medium and indifferent to the efforts of theorists to explain abstract art *completely*, purism is the terminus of a salutary reaction against the mistakes of painting and sculpture in the past several centuries which were due to such a confusion.

I.

There can be, I believe, such a thing as a dominant art form; this was what literature had become in Europe by the 17th century. (Not that the ascendancy of a particular art always coincides with its greatest productions. In point of achievement, music was the greatest art of this period.) By the middle of the 17th century the pictorial arts had been relegated almost everywhere into the hands of the courts, where they eventually degenerated into relatively trivial interior decoration. The most creative class in society, the rising mercantile bourgeoisie, impelled perhaps by the iconoclasm of the Reformation (Pascal's Jansenist contempt for painting is a symptom) and by the relative cheapness and mobility of the physical medium after the invention of printing, had turned most of its creative and acquisitive energy towards literature.

Now, when it happens that a single art is given the dominant role, it becomes the prototype of all art: the others try to shed their proper characters and imitate its effects. The dominant art in turn tries itself to absorb the functions of the others. A confusion of the arts results, by which the subservient ones are perverted and distorted; they are forced to deny their own nature in an effort to attain the effects of the dominant art. However, the subservient arts can only be mishandled in this way when they have reached such a degree of technical facility as to enable them to pretend to conceal their *mediums*. In other words, the artist must have gained such power over his material as to annihilate it seemingly in favor of *illusion*. Music was saved from the fate of the pictorial arts in the 17th and 18th centuries by its comparatively rudimentary technique and the relative shortness of its development as a formal art. Aside from the fact that in its nature it is the art furthest removed from imitation, the possibilities of music had not been explored sufficiently to enable it to strive for illusionist effects.

But painting and sculpture, the arts of illusion par excellence, had by that time achieved such facility as to make them infinitely susceptible to the temptation to emulate the effects, not only of illusion, but of other arts. Not only could painting imitate sculpture, and sculpture, painting, but both could attempt to reproduce the effects of literature. And it was for the effects of literature that 17th and 18th century painting strained most of all. Literature, for a number of reasons, had won the upper hand, and the plastic

arts—especially in the form of easel painting and statuary—tried to win admission to its domain. Although this does not account completely for the decline of those arts during this period, it seems to have been the form of that decline. Decline it was, compared to what had taken place in Italy, Flanders, Spain and Germany the century before. Good artists, it is true, continue to appear—I do not have to exaggerate the depression to make my point—but not good *schools* of art, not good followers. The circumstances surrounding the appearance of the individual great artists seem to make them almost all exceptions; we think of them as great artists “in spite of.” There is a scarcity of distinguished small talents. And the very level of greatness sinks by comparison to the work of the past.

In general, painting and sculpture in the hands of the lesser talents—and this is what tells the story—become nothing more than ghosts and “stooges” of literature. All emphasis is taken away from the medium and transferred to subject matter. It is no longer a question even of realistic imitation, since that is taken for granted, but of the artist’s ability to interpret subject matter for poetic effects and so forth.

We ourselves, even today, are too close to literature to appreciate its status as a dominant art. Perhaps an example of the converse will make clearer what I mean. In China, I believe, painting and sculpture became in the course of the development of culture the dominant arts. There we see poetry given a role subordinate to them, and consequently assuming their limitations: the poem confines itself to the single moment of painting and to an emphasis upon visual details. The Chinese even require visual delight from the handwriting in which the poem is set down. And by comparison to their pictorial and decorative arts doesn’t the later poetry of the Chinese seem rather thin and monotonous?

Lessing, in his *Laokoon* written in the 1760s, recognized the presence of a practical as well as a theoretical confusion of the arts. But he saw its ill effects exclusively in terms of literature, and his opinions on plastic art only exemplify the typical misconceptions of his age. He attacked the descriptive verse of poets like James Thomson as an invasion of the domain of landscape painting, but all he could find to say about painting’s invasion of poetry was to object to allegorical pictures which required an explanation,

and to paintings like Titian's "Prodigal Son," which incorporate "two necessarily separate points of time in one and the same picture."

II.

The Romantic Revival or Revolution seemed at first to offer some hope for painting, but by the time it departed the scene, the confusion of the arts had become worse. The Romantic theory of art was that the artist feels something and passes on this feeling—not the situation or thing which stimulated it—to his audience. To preserve the immediacy of the feeling it was even more necessary than before, when art was imitation rather than communication, to suppress the role of the medium. The medium was a regrettable if necessary physical obstacle between the artist and his audience, which in some ideal state would disappear entirely to leave the experience of the spectator or reader identical with that of the artist. In spite of the fact that music considered as an art of pure feeling, was beginning to win almost equal esteem, this attitude represents a final triumph for poetry. All feeling for the arts as *métiers*, crafts, disciplines—of which some sense had survived until the 18th century—was lost. The arts came to be regarded as nothing more or less than so many powers of the personality. Shelley expressed this best when in his *Defense of Poetry* he exalted poetry above the other arts because its medium came closest, as Bosanquet puts it, to being no medium at all. In practice this aesthetic encouraged that particular and widespread form of artistic dishonesty which consists in the attempt to escape from the problems of the medium of one art by taking refuge in the effects of another. Painting is the most susceptible to evasions of this sort, and painting suffered most at the hands of the Romantics.

At first it did not seem so. As a result of the triumph of the burghers and of their appropriation of all the arts a fresh current of creative energy was released into every field. If the Romantic revolution in painting was at first more a revolution in subject matter than in anything else, abandoning the oratorical and frivolous literature of 18th century painting in search of a more original, more powerful, more sincere literary content, it also brought with it a greater boldness in pictorial means. Delacroix, Géricault,

even Ingres, were enterprising enough to find new form for the new content they introduced. But the net result of their efforts was to make the incubus of literature in painting even deadlier for the lesser talents who followed them. The worst manifestations of literary and sentimental painting had already begun to appear in the painting of the late 18th century—especially in England, where a revival which produced some of the best English painting was equally efficacious in speeding up the process of degeneration. Now the schools of Ingres and Delacroix joined with those of Morland and Greuze and Vigée-Lebrun to become the official painting of the 19th century. There have been academies before, but for the first time we have academicism. Painting enjoyed a revival of activity in 19th century France such as had not been seen since the 16th century, and academicism could produce such good painters as Corot and Theodore Rousseau, and even Daumier—yet in spite of this the academicians sank painting to a level that was in some respects an all-time low. The name of this low is Ver-net, Gérôme, Leighton, Watts, Moreau, Böcklin, the Pre-Raphael-ites, etc., etc. That some of these painters had real talent only made their influence the more pernicious. It took talent—among other things—to lead art that far astray. Bourgeois society gave these talents a prescription, and they filled it—with talent.

It was not realistic imitation in itself that did the damage so much as realistic illusion in the service of sentimental and declamatory literature. Perhaps the two go hand in hand. To judge from Western and Graeco-Roman art, it seems so. Yet it is true of Western painting that in so far as it has been the creation of a rationalist and scientifically-minded city culture, it has always had a bias towards a realism that tries to achieve illusions by overpowering the medium, and is more interested in exploiting the practical meanings of objects than in savoring their appearance.

III.

Romanticism was the last great tendency flowing *directly* from bourgeois society that was able to inspire and stimulate the profoundly responsible artist—the artist conscious of certain inflexible obligations to the standards of his craft. By 1848 Romanticism had exhausted itself. After that the impulse, although

indeed it had to originate in bourgeois society, could only come in the guise of a denial of that society, as a turning away from it. It was not to be an about-face towards a new society, but an emigration to a Bohemia which was to be art's sanctuary from capitalism. It was to be the task of the avant-garde to perform in opposition to bourgeois society the function of finding new and adequate cultural forms for the expression of that same society, without at the same time succumbing to its ideological divisions and its refusal to permit the arts to be their own justification. The avant-garde, both child and negation of Romanticism, becomes the embodiment of art's instinct of self-preservation. It is interested in, and feels itself responsible to, only the values of art; and, given society as it is, has an organic sense of what is good and what is bad for art.

As the first and most important item upon its agenda, the avant-garde saw the necessity of an escape from ideas, which were infecting the arts with the ideological struggles of society. Ideas came to mean subject matter in general. (Subject matter as distinguished from content: in the sense that every work of art must have content, but that subject matter is something the artist does or does not have in mind when he is actually at work.) This meant a new and greater emphasis upon form, and it also involved the assertion of the arts as independent vocations, disciplines and crafts, absolutely autonomous, and entitled to respect for their own sakes, and not merely as vessels of communication. It was the signal for a revolt against the dominance of literature, which was subject matter at its most oppressive.

The avant-garde has pursued, and still pursues, several variants, whose chronological order is by no means clear, but can be best traced in painting, which as the chief victim of literature brought the problem into sharpest focus. (Forces stemming from outside art play a much larger part than I have room to acknowledge here. And I must perforce be rather schematic and abstract, since I am interested more in tracing large outlines than in accounting for and gathering in all particular manifestations.)

By the second third of the 19th century academic painting had degenerated from the pictorial to the picturesque. Everything depends on the anecdote or the message. The painted picture occurs in blank, indeterminate space; it just happens to be on a square of canvas and inside a frame. It might just as well have been

breathed on air or formed out of plasma. It tries to be something you imagine rather than see—or else a bas-relief or a statue. Everything contributes to the denial of the medium, as if the artist were ashamed to admit that he had actually painted his picture instead of dreaming it forth.

This state of affairs could not be overcome at one stroke. The campaign for the redemption of painting was to be one of comparatively slow attrition at first. Nineteenth century painting made its first break with literature when in the person of the Communard, Courbet, it fled from spirit to matter. Courbet, the first real avant-garde painter, tried to reduce his art to immediate sense data by painting only what the eye could see as a machine unaided by the mind. He took for his subject matter prosaic contemporary life. As avant-gardists so often do, he tried to demolish official bourgeois art by turning it inside out. By driving something as far as it will go you often get back to where it started. A new flatness begins to appear in Courbet's painting, and an equally new attention to every inch of the canvas, regardless of its relation to the "centers of interest." (Zola, the Goncourts and poets like Verhaeren were Courbet's correlatives in literature. They too were "experimental"; they too were trying to get rid of ideas and "literature," that is, to establish their art on a more stable basis than the crumbling bourgeois oecumene.) If the avant-garde seems unwilling to claim naturalism for itself it is because the tendency failed too often to achieve the objectivity it professed, i.e. it succumbed to "ideas."

Impressionism, reasoning beyond Courbet in its pursuit of materialist objectivity, abandoned common sense experience and sought to emulate the detachment of science, imagining that thereby it would get at the very essence of painting as well as of visual experience. It was becoming important to determine the essential elements of each of the arts. Impressionist painting becomes more an exercise in color vibrations than representation of nature. Manet meanwhile, closer to Courbet, was attacking subject matter on its own terrain by including it in his pictures and exterminating it then and there. His insolent indifference to his subject, which in itself was often striking, and his flat color-modeling were as revolutionary as Impressionist technique proper. Like the Impressionists he saw the problems of painting as first and foremost problems of the medium, and he called the spectator's attention to this.

IV.

The second variant of the *avant-garde's* development is concurrent in time with the first. It is easy to recognize this variant, but rather difficult to expose its motivation. Tendencies go in opposite directions, and cross-purposes meet. But tying everything together is the fact that in the end cross-purposes indeed do meet. There is a common effort in each of the arts to expand the expressive resources of the medium, not in order to express ideas and notions, but to express with greater immediacy sensations, the irreducible elements of experience. Along this path it seemed as though the *avant-garde* in its attempt to escape from "literature" had set out to treble the confusion of the arts by having them imitate every other art except literature.¹ (By this time literature had had its opprobrious sense expanded to include everything the *avant-garde* objected to in official bourgeois culture.) Each art would demonstrate its powers by capturing the effects of its sister arts or by taking a sister art for its subject. Since art was the only validity left, what better subject was there for each art than the procedures and effects of some other art? Impressionist painting, with its progressions and rhythmic suffusions of color, with its moods and atmospheres, was arriving at effects to which the Impressionists themselves gave the terms of Romantic music. Painting, however, was the least affected by this new confusion. Poetry and music were its chief victims. Poetry—for it too had to escape from "literature"—was imitating the effects of painting and sculpture (Gautier, the Parnassians, and later the Imagists) and, of course, those of music (Poe had narrowed "true" poetry down to the lyric). Music, in flight from the undisciplined, bottomless sentimentality of the Romantics, was striving to describe and narrate (program music). That music at this point imitates literature would seem to spoil my thesis. But music imitates painting as much as it does poetry when it becomes representational; and besides, it seems to me that Debussy used the program more as a pretext for experiment than as an end in itself. In the same way that the Impressionist painters were trying to get at the structure beneath the color, Debussy was trying to get at the "sound underneath the note."

¹This is the confusion of the arts for which Babbitt made Romanticism responsible.

Aside from what was going on inside music, music as an art in itself began at this time to occupy a very important position in relation to the other arts. Because of its "absolute" nature, its remoteness from imitation, its almost complete absorption in the very physical quality of its medium, as well as because of its resources of suggestion, music had come to replace poetry as the paragon art. It was the art which the other avant-garde arts envied most, and whose effects they tried hardest to imitate. Thus it was the principal agent of the new confusion of the arts. What attracted the avant-garde to music as much as its power to suggest was, as I have said, its nature as an art of immediate sensation. When Verlaine said, "De la musique avant toute chose," he was not only asking poetry to be more suggestive—suggestiveness, after all, was a poetic ideal foisted upon music—but also to affect the reader or listener with more immediate and more powerful sensations.

But only when the avant-garde's interest in music led it to consider music as a *method* of art rather than as a kind of effect did the avant-garde find what it was looking for. It was when it was discovered that the advantage of music lay chiefly in the fact that it was an "abstract" art, an art of "pure form." It was such because it was incapable, objectively, of communicating anything else than a sensation, and because this sensation could not be conceived in any other terms than those of the sense through which it entered the consciousness. An imitative painting can be described in terms of non-visual identities, a piece of music cannot, whether it attempts to imitate or not. The effects of music are the effects, essentially, of pure form; those of painting and poetry are too often accidental to the formal natures of these arts. Only by accepting the example of music and defining each of the other arts solely in the terms of the sense or faculty which perceived its effects and by excluding from each art whatever is intelligible in the terms of any other sense or faculty would the non-musical arts attain the "purity" and self-sufficiency which they desired; which they desired, that is, in so far as they were avant-garde arts. The emphasis, therefore, was to be on the physical, the sensorial. "Literature's" corrupting influence is only felt when the senses are neglected. The latest confusion of the arts was the result of a mistaken conception of music as the only immediately sensuous art.

But the other arts can also be sensuous, if only they will look to music, not to ape its effects, but to borrow its principles as a "pure" art, as an art which is abstract because it is almost nothing else except sensuous.¹

V.

Guiding themselves, whether consciously or unconsciously, by a notion of purity derived from the example of music, the avant-garde arts have in the last fifty years achieved a purity and a radical de-limitation of their fields of activity for which there is no previous example in the history of culture. The arts lie safe now, each within its "legitimate" boundaries, and free trade has been replaced by autarchy. Purity in art consists in the acceptance, willing acceptance, of the limitations of the medium of the specific art. To prove that their concept of purity is something more than a bias in taste, painters point to Oriental, primitive and children's art as instances of the universality and naturalness and objectivity of their ideal of purity. Composers and poets, although to a much lesser extent, may justify their efforts to attain purity by referring to the same precedents. Dissonance is present in early and non-Western music, "unintelligibility" in folk poetry. The issue is, of course, focussed most sharply in the plastic arts, for they, in their non-decorative function, have been the most closely associated with imitation, and it is in their case that the ideal of the pure and the abstract has met the most resistance.

The arts, then, have been hunted back to their mediums, and there they have been isolated, concentrated and defined. It is by virtue of its medium that each art is unique and strictly itself. To restore the identity of an art the opacity of its medium must be emphasized. For the visual arts the medium is discovered to be physical; hence pure painting and pure sculpture seek above all else to affect the spectator physically. In poetry, which, as I have said, had also to escape from "literature" or subject matter for its salvation from society, it is decided that the medium is essentially psychological and sub- or supra-logical. The poem is to aim at the general consciousness of the reader, not simply his intelligence.

¹The ideas about music which Pater expresses in *The School of Giorgione* reflect this transition from the musical to the abstract better than any single work of art.

It would be well to consider "pure" poetry for a moment, before going on to painting. The theory of poetry as incantation, hypnosis or drug—as psychological agent then—goes back to Poe, and eventually to Coleridge and Edmund Burke with their efforts to locate the enjoyment of poetry in the "Fancy" or "Imagination." Mallarmé, however, was the first to base a consistent practice of poetry upon it. Sound, he decided, is only an auxiliary of poetry, not the medium itself; and besides, most poetry is now read, not recited: the sound of words is a part of their meaning, not the vessel of it. To deliver poetry from the subject and to give full play to its true affective power it is necessary to free words from logic. The medium of poetry is isolated in the power of the word to evoke associations and to connote. Poetry subsists no longer in the relations between words as meanings, but in the relations between words as personalities composed of sound, history and possibilities of meaning. Grammatical logic is retained only in so far as it is necessary to set these personalities in motion, for unrelated words are static when read and not recited aloud. Tentative efforts are made to discard metric form and rhyme, because they are regarded as too local and determinate, too much attached to specific times and places and social conventions to pertain to the essence of poetry. There are experiments in poetic prose. But as in the case of music, it was found that formal structure was indispensable, that some such structure was integral to the medium of poetry as an aspect of its resistance. . . . The poem still offers possibilities of meaning—but only possibilities. Should any of them be too precisely realized, the poem would lose the greatest part of its efficacy, which is to agitate the consciousness with infinite possibilities by approaching the brink of meaning and yet never falling over it. The poet writes, not so much to *express*, as to create a thing which will operate upon the reader's consciousness to produce the emotion of poetry. The content of the poem is what it does to the reader, not what it communicates. The emotion of the reader derives from the poem as a unique object—pretendedly—and not from referents outside the poem. This is pure poetry as ambitious contemporary poets try to define it by the example of their work. Obviously, it is an impossible ideal, yet one which most of the best poetry of the last fifty years has tried to reach, whether it is

poetry about nothing or poetry about the plight of contemporary society.

It is easier to isolate the medium in the case of the plastic arts, and consequently avant-garde painting and sculpture can be said to have attained a much more radical purity than avant-garde poetry. Painting and sculpture can become more completely nothing but what they do; like functional architecture and the machine, they *look* what they *do*. The picture or statue exhausts itself in the visual sensation it produces. There is nothing to identify, connect or think about, but everything to feel. Pure poetry strives for infinite suggestion, pure plastic art for the minimum. If the poem, as Valéry claims, is a machine to produce the emotion of poetry, the painting and statue are machines to produce the emotion of "plastic sight." The purely plastic or abstract qualities of the work of art are the only ones that count. Emphasize the medium and its difficulties, and at once the purely plastic, the proper, values of visual art come to the fore. Overpower the medium to the point where all sense of its resistance disappears, and the adventitious uses of art become more important.

The history of avant-garde painting is that of a progressive surrender to the resistance of its medium; which resistance consists chiefly in the flat picture plane's denial of efforts to "hole through" it for realistic perspectival space. In making this surrender, painting not only got rid of imitation—and with it, "literature"—but also of realistic imitation's corollary confusion between painting and sculpture. (Sculpture, on its side, emphasizes the resistance of its material to the efforts of the artist to ply it into shapes uncharacteristic of stone, metal, wood, etc.) Painting abandons chiaroscuro and shaded modelling. Brush strokes are often defined for their own sake. The motto of the Renaissance artist, *Ars est artem celare*, is exchanged for *Ars est artem demonstrare*. Primary colors, the "instinctive," easy colors, replace tones and tonality. Line, which is one of the most abstract elements in painting since it is never found in nature as the definition of contour, returns to oil painting as the third color between two other color areas. Under the influence of the square shape of the canvas, forms tend to become geometrical—and simplified, because simplification is also a part of the instinctive accommodation to the

medium. But most important of all, the picture plane itself grows shallower and shallower, flattening out and pressing together the fictive planes of depth until they meet as one upon the real and material plane which is the actual surface of the canvas; where they lie side by side or interlocked or transparently imposed upon each other. Where the painter still tries to indicate real objects their shapes flatten and spread in the dense, two-dimensional atmosphere. A vibrating tension is set up as the objects struggle to maintain their volume against the tendency of the real picture plane to re-assert its material flatness and crush them to silhouettes. In a further stage realistic space cracks and splinters into flat planes which come forward, parallel to the plane surface. Sometimes this advance to the surface is accelerated by painting a segment of wood or texture *trompe l'oeil*, or by drawing exactly printed letters, and placing them so that they destroy the partial illusion of depth by slamming the various planes together. Thus the artist deliberately emphasizes the illusoriness of the illusions which he pretends to create. Sometimes these elements are used in an effort to preserve an illusion of depth by being placed on the nearest plane in order to drive the others back. But the result is an optical illusion, not a realistic one, and only emphasizes further the impenetrability of the plane surface.

The destruction of realistic pictorial space, and with it, that of the object, was accomplished by means of the travesty that was cubism. The cubist painter eliminated color because, consciously or unconsciously, he was parodying, in order to destroy, the academic methods of achieving volume and depth, which are shading and perspective, and as such have little to do with color in the common sense of the word. The cubist used these same methods to break the canvas into a multiplicity of subtle recessive planes, which seem to shift and fade into infinite depths and yet insist on returning to the surface of the canvas. As we gaze as at a cubist painting of the last phase we witness the birth and death of three-dimensional pictorial space.

And as in painting the pristine flatness of the stretched canvas constantly struggles to overcome every other element, so in sculpture the stone figure appears to be on the point of relapsing into the original monolith, and the cast seems to narrow and smooth itself back to the original molten stream from which it was poured,

or tries to remember the texture and plasticity of the clay in which it was first worked out.

Sculpture hovers finally on the verge of "pure" architecture, and painting, having been pushed up from fictive depths, is forced through the surface of the canvas to emerge on the other side in the form of paper, cloth, cement and actual objects of wood and other materials pasted, glued or nailed to what was originally the transparent picture plane, which the painter no longer dares to puncture—or if he does, it is only to dare. Artists like Hans Arp, who begin as painters, escape eventually from the prison of the single plane by painting on wood or plaster and using molds or carpentry to raise and lower planes. They go, in other words, from painting to colored bas-relief, and finally—so far must they fly in order to return to three-dimensionality without at the same time risking the illusion—they become sculptors and create objects in the round, through which they can free their feelings for movement and direction from the increasing ascetic geometry of pure painting. (Except in the case of Arp and one or two others, the sculpture of most of these metamorphosed painters is rather unsculptural, stemming as it does from the discipline of painting. It uses color, fragile and intricate shapes and a variety of materials. It is construction, fabrication.)

The French and Spanish in Paris brought painting to the point of the pure abstraction, but it remained, with a few exceptions, for the Dutch, Germans, English and Americans to realize it. It is in their hands that abstract purism has been consolidated into a school, dogma and credo. By 1939 the center of abstract painting had shifted to London, while in Paris the younger generation of French and Spanish painters had reacted against abstract purity and turned back to a confusion of literature with painting as extreme as any of the past. These young orthodox surrealists are not to be identified, however, with such pseudo- or mock surrealists of the previous generation as Miró, Klee and Arp, whose work, despite its apparent intention, has only contributed to the further deployment of abstract painting pure and simple. Indeed, a good many of the artists—if not the majority—who contributed importantly to the development of modern painting came to it with the desire to exploit the break with imitative realism for a more powerful expressiveness, but so inexorable was the logic of the develop-

ment that in the end their work constituted but another step towards abstract art, and a further sterilization of the expressive factors. This has been true, whether the artist was Van Gogh, Picasso or Klee. All roads led to the same place.

VI.

I find that I have offered no other explanation for the present superiority of abstract art than its historical justification. So what I have written has turned out to be an historical apology for abstract art. To argue from any other basis would require more space than is at my disposal, and would involve an entrance into the politics of taste—to use Venturi's phrase—from which there is no exit—on paper. My own experience of art has forced me to accept most of the standards of taste from which abstract art has derived, but I do not maintain that they are the only valid standards through eternity. I find them simply the most valid ones at this given moment. I have no doubt that they will be replaced in the future by other standards, which will be perhaps more inclusive than any possible now. And even now they do not exclude all other possible criteria. I am still able to enjoy a Rembrandt more for its expressive qualities than for its achievement of abstract values—as rich as it may be in them.

It suffices to say that there is nothing in the nature of abstract art which compels it to be so. The imperative comes from history, from the age in conjunction with a particular moment reached in a particular tradition of art. This conjunction holds the artist in a vise from which at the present moment he can escape only by surrendering his ambition and returning to a stale past. This is the difficulty for those who are dissatisfied with abstract art, feeling that it is too decorative or too arid and “inhuman,” and who desire a return to representation and literature in plastic art. Abstract art cannot be disposed of by a simple-minded evasion. Or by negation. We can only dispose of abstract art by assimilating it, by fighting our way through it. Where to? I do not know. Yet it seems to me that the wish to return to the imitation of nature in art has been given no more justification than the desire of certain partisans of abstract art to legislate it into permanency.

The Cultural Front

James T. Farrell

INASMUCH AS THIS COLUMN is called *The Cultural Front*, my readers will be expecting me to write about culture. But I dare not do that in times such as the present. Like Diderot, I believe that martyrdom only proves that our party is the weaker. And were I to write about culture, I might be a martyr. For recently Archibald MacLeish, Waldo Frank, and Lewis Mumford have proven in the liberal weeklies that culture is subversive. So, I am going to tell my readers why I am a baseball fan. I am sure that MacLeish, Frank, and Mumford will not consider baseball subversive. Even President Roosevelt likes baseball. And President Roosevelt said that Archibald MacLeish is a “poet, scholar, and a gentleman.”

Last week, I was out at the Yankee stadium. A tall, rangy first baseman for the Cleveland Indians strode up to the plate and hit a home run. Thousands cheered his lusty wallop. I confess that I should have joined them had I not a hot dog in one hand and a score card in the other. While this fellow trotted around the bases, I suddenly realized how lucky I was in not being able to applaud him. For his name is Trosky. To be sure that damaging extra *t* is absent from his name, but if you pronounce it carelessly, one can't be sure of the name you are mentioning. If I were to cheer a baseball player named Trosky, I am doubtful if Waldo Frank would compromise with me on that missing *t*.

At all events, I hope that even my high brow readers will not be disappointed with me for not writing on culture. I trust that they will read me on baseball. One of them may. I refer to Delmore Schwartz. He was slated to become the regular third base man on my team, the Studs Lonigan A. C. After playing brilliantly for one Sunday, he went off to busy himself with culture at Yaddo and Harvard. I warned him that he should stick to baseball. But he disregarded my advice. So I lost a star ball player, and Delmore is now in the doghouse, and liable, any day, to find Archibald MacLeish rapping at his door with a warrant. Well, neither MacLeish, Frank, nor Mumford will get me the way they have Schwartz. I have abandoned culture, and all its pomps.

In this column, I will not say one word for culture. I advise everyone to adopt with me the profession of being a baseball fan. To be sure, I used to be a novelist. And that is not in my favor with Archie. Archie has demonstrated that all of our leading post-war novelists have been subversive, and that they have undermined the morale of youth. One of these dangerous fellows, Ernest Hemingway, influenced my own writing at a critical time. His writing suggested to me many possibilities in subject matter and the use of dialogue which I had not perceived clearly before I read him. And since his work is so dangerous, it must have undermined my morale. And I fear that the corruption must be not only in me but also in my novels. So God bless the mark, the less I say about novels the better. I am skipping the question entirely.

That saves me from MacLeish, but there is still Waldo. I once told Waldo a lie. He asked me if I had read his book, *The Rediscovery of America*. I said that I had, but did not understand it. However, I really did understand what he was saying. He said that the way to rediscover America was for everyone else to become like Waldo Frank and to get a "sense of the whole." Well, the trouble with me was that I was under the influence of John Dewey. And Waldo has just written to prove that John Dewey is very dangerous, and an ally of totalitarianism. For John Dewey's espousal of scientific method is a shallow rationalism which only encourages the fascism within us. Waldo thinks that if you are influenced by Dewey, you may wake up in bed with Hitlerism and Stalinism. And Waldo must know something about these questions, because he was pretty close to the bedroom of Stalinism himself. I am further exposed to Waldo because not only have I defended many of the ideas of Dewey: I have also defended logical positivism. Well, it was all a mistake. Waldo is right, and it is aiding the totalitarians to be intelligent. So, I am not going to discuss these matters any more. I am a baseball fan. I am going to tell why.

Now, I have safely eluded the clutches of Archie and Waldo, but what can I do about Lewis Mumford. He doesn't like Dewey or Charles Beard, and I once wrote a letter to *The Saturday Review of Literature* in which I was foolish enough and sufficiently unpatriotic to declare that the reason that Lewis Mumford did not like John Dewey was because Mumford did not understand Dewey. And Beard has influenced my entire conception of history. Whenever I read history, his *flabby* influence affects my interpretations. All I can do here is to make a bargain with Mumford. If he won't punish me for my crimes, I will let him be the clean up man on my ball team. His recent writings indicate that he is able to clean up his betters anyway, and so, he would be an excellent man batting fourth on the Studs Lonigan A. C.

Now that I have confessed and saved myself from culture, I am ready to get down to business. I am a baseball fan. I once wrote a book review in which I pointed out that the charm of baseball lay partly in the fact that it is the most scientific of sports. I suggested that in baseball,

the element of time played an all-predominant role. It is calculated on split seconds. And when I was reading *Logic* by John Dewey, I wrote Dr. Dewey a letter in which I discussed baseball in terms of his conceptions of empiric propositions. I suggested that every pitch, every movement to right or left by a defensive player was an empiric proposition. I further suggested that before every pitch, the batter's stance, and his preparation to hit or not constituted a counter empiric proposition to that of the defensive team. I believe that I proved the point that baseball, when properly played, is calculated on a strictly rational basis. In brief, it is a logical game. But logic and rationalism are shallow, and so here I am, trying to get out of the clutches of Waldo Frank, and what do I do, but fall right back into them. Baseball is too rational. Therefore it must be dangerous. I will not tell why I am a baseball fan. This very minute, I renounce baseball along with culture. I hereby announce that I am not only an ex-novelist: I am also an ex-baseball fan. I will have as little truck with batting averages as I will, from this point on, with the novels of Ernest Hemingway, the philosophy of John Dewey, the logic of Carnap, and the history of Charles Beard. I know what I will do. Dr. Max Lerner recently quit being a fellow traveller of the Kremlin, and wrote an article in *The Saturday Review of Literature* in which he signified more or less that he was becoming a fellow-traveller of Waldo Frank. I am going to go him one better. I am going to become a fellow-traveller of all three of these intellectual cops. I will not join the Fifth Column, not even through such an entrance as the turnstiles of the Yankee Stadium.

"Every Personal Consideration Must Give Way"

Elsewhere in this issue we print an appeal for contributions to THE PARTISAN REVIEW FUND FOR EUROPEAN WRITERS AND ARTISTS. The letter from Ignazio Silone from which we quote below was received just as this issue was going to press.

"There is one thing above all I want to say to my friends in America: that there is not a moment to be lost in sending aid, somehow, to our German, Italian and Spanish friends who took refuge in France. All the news we get here is really frightful. The latest: a telegram from Marseilles informs us that Federica Montseny, former minister in Cabellero's cabinet, has just been handed over to the Spanish authorities by the Petain government. Letters that have come to me recently from V..... S....., F..... J....., H..... S..... and others who are in the unoccupied part of France, justify the most serious fears. While waiting for whatever fate the military authorities have in store for them, they ask the immediate sending of funds with which to buy food. . . ."

"There are times when every personal consideration must give way, and only a collective viewpoint is permissible. . . . Finally, let me say now—after years of gloomy prophecies—that there are aspects of the situation over here today that have escaped the notice of the American press and that permit us still to hope. . . ."

IGNAZIO SILONE

July 14.

Horace Gregory

BROADWAY MCPHAIL APPLIES FOR REEMPLOY- MENT AT HIS OLD STAND

Do I have to prove I can sell anything?
You can see it in my eyes, the way I brush my hair,
even when I need a drink and can't stop talking.

Do I have to prove it with my two hands and arms,
lifting five hundred pounds above my head,
until the house cheers and something falls,
the platform broken and the lights gone out,
crowds calling for police,
and a child crying for its mother down the aisles?

If the park is beautiful and the day is warm,
I can sell the power in my eyes that makes life grow
where not even one blade of grass has grown before,
that is like sunlight breaking through
darkness in a small room,
that shines and pours and flows,
that is here forever when it is here
and is gone forever as sunlight drops to darkness
when it goes.

I could even teach millions how to sell,
how to own a car and pay the rent,
how to live as though you were living in the sky,
your children happy before they get too old.
If you do it right, you can sell anything,
even your voice and what you think you hear,
even your face on billboards ten feet high,
your youth, your age and what you hate and love,
and it gets sold.

If you can wake up in the morning early,
if you can teach yourself to catch the train,
if you can hang out everything for sale,
if you can say, "I am a man,
I can sell asphalt off the street,
I can sell snowbright
dead women gleaming through shop windows,
or diamond horseshoe naked dancing girls,
or eight hours on my feet,
or twenty years of talk in telephones,
or fifty years behind a desk"—
you need not fail.

If you are strong as I am, you can hear
yourself talking to yourself at night
until your hair turns gray:
"I am God's white-haired boy,
I almost love the way I sell
my lips, my blood, my heart: and leave them there,
and no one else can sell such pity and such glory,
such light, such hope
even down to the last magnificent,
half-forgotten love affair."

Perhaps only I can do it as it should be done,
selling what remains, yet knowing that a last
day will come and a last half-hour,
or five minutes left impossible to sell,
the last more valuable than all the rest.

Louis MacNeice

THE PREACHER

He carried a ball of darkness with him, unrolled it
To find his way by in streets and rooms;
Every train or boat he took was Charon's ferry,
He never left the Catacombs;

He never smiled but spun his strands of black
Among the secular crowd who, when he tripped their feet
Saw their own faces in the wet street, saw
Their hell beneath the street.

Among old iron, cinders, sizzling dumps,
A world castrated, amputated, trepanned,
He walked in the lost acres crying 'Repent
For the Kingdom of death is at hand.'

He took the books of pagan art and read
Between the lines or washed them out to prove
Humanism a palimpsest and God's
Anger a more primal fact than love.

And in the city at night where drunken song
Climbed the air like tendrils of vine
He bared a knife and slashed the roots and laid
Another curse on Cain. The sign

Of the cross between his eyes, his mouth drawn down,
He passed the flower-sellers and all
The roses reeked of an abattoir, the gardenias
Became the décor of a funeral.

His hands were always clenched, an eagle
Riveted on a world of vice;
Going upstairs he built, block upon block,
An Aztec pyramid of sacrifice.

Going upstairs to die in a bare room
He tried to square his accounts; lying in bed
He summoned home his deeds, drew back
Sixty years' expended thread,

Pulled it in through the chink beneath the door,
Wrapped it around him, all
His faith and his despair a ball of black
And he himself at the centre of the ball.

Emma Swan

THE WONDER CITY

In this living city we lie
like leaves wind-heaved
from boughs, branches slackly
loosing them, too poor to keep.

Gritty in buildings we abide
with stalks that seek soil,
the ground unpaved, the heart made
whole and healed in its role.

Not for long our hopes stir
beyond the shining peaks
that cast a stone shadow. Bird
and flowering are lost in leaks

of dark that sap our strength,
seeping through day-wake, sleep
until the haven of our hope at length
becomes the moulding heap

in which we fall:
a fancied paradise and hell.

Gordon Sylander

MARINE

The children of the laundryman
Mock the wood-voiced sand bird.

The children of the laundryman
March upon the turtle.

The children of the laundryman
Disarm the willow.

Books

"EXILE AND CUNNING"

JAMES JOYCE. By Herbert Gorman. Farrar and Rinehart. \$3.50.

Mr. Gorman possesses exactly the right combination of devotion and naïveté toward his subject to make his book always interesting, and perhaps, in its way, as valuable, as a biography written by a more detached and wiser man. For Mr. Gorman documents meticulously (no one will ever have to "research" Joyce's addresses in Trieste, Zurich and Paris, for example), at the same time that he lets through facts which might have been suppressed by a biographer of a more subtle kind; and from these facts conclusions may be drawn by men who will not have Gorman's first hand knowledge of Joyce, but may be gifted with greater powers of inference. As it is, Gorman's devotion is so sincere that it is often touching; and he has done such a good job of canvassing certain portions of Joyce's career, hitherto unexplored, that no one, whatever his insight or powers of interpretation, could have done better.

The most valuable part of the book, apart from certain dropped sentences which open up whole fields of speculation Gorman evidently has no notion of, are the chapters (as straight history of period and custom) which describe Joyce's long battle against the smugness and fright of British and Irish publishers (and printers) from 1906 to 1914. This early battle was in some ways more bitter than the later struggles with English and American censors, after the publication of *Ulysses*. Joyce's correspondence with Grant Richards, explaining the purpose of *Dubliners* (accepted by that firm in 1906, but later dropped) and defending this book against the moral indignation of the printers who set it up, is a fine contribution to the social history of the time. Joyce's remark concerning the powers taken over by the printers is typical: "In no other civilized country in Europe, I think, is a printer allowed to open his mouth [in moral censure]." Joyce's later defeat at the hands of Maunsel and Co. (Dublin), illuminates the Irish situation, the narrowness and bigotry of which, in the same years, Yeats was excoriating in the scornful poems written against the petty bourgeois town-Irish in general. It was this narrow-mindedness which finally disabused Yeats of the idea of a "popular" theatre, and drove him toward the subjects and the forms of his later style. And it was after Joyce's final defeat at the hands of libel-fearing Irish publishers, that *Ulysses* took final shape in his mind.

Gorman's account of Joyce's early training, and his family situation, corroborates much we have already learned from Joyce's work. It is brought out with great clearness, in Gorman's account, that Joyce never received a day's training from other than Jesuit hands. And Joyce's father

was a town-Irishman, of the sort who holds the peasant in contempt. One of the donations of generations of English oppression and misrule is this Irish snobbery, of the Irish toward the Irish—a snobbery rarely admitted, but a strong factor in Irish life and politics. The elder Joyce would have none of Christian Brother schools, where his son would be a fellow scholar of “Paddy Stink and Micky Mud.” Clongowes, which Joyce entered at the age of six, was a kind of Irish Eton, and young James was a companion of “gentlemen.” This snobbery and this education shaped Joyce more than is generally realized. It accounts for his early exile from caste-ridden Dublin, for the “seedy hauteur” noted in his manner as a youth, for his scorn of Irish Nationalism and his contempt for the theatre Yeats and Lady Gregory worked to give the Irish people. To Joyce the Irish people were “rabblement”; his interests were attached to the main stream of European art and literature: Ibsen, Hauptmann, Maeterlinck. He took no part in any of the developments of Irish writing and politics, from the production of *Countess Cathleen* when he was seventeen, through the *Playboy* riots, the Easter Rebellion and the later “troubles.” He had exiled himself from them.

Joyce began, that is, with the attitude which Yeats came to share. Yeats broke with the “popular theatre” in 1912; Joyce left Ireland in 1906. The results of these breaks were, however, completely different, because the reasons and background of the two men were different. Yeats never had to fight the same set-up as Joyce; he was an Anglo-Irishman and a Protestant. Ireland will tolerate a heretic where it will never tolerate a renegade. Joyce’s break with the Church necessitated his break with Ireland. Yeats’ break with the fervent Nationalism of his youth, and his loss of belief in the possibilities of a native Irish art, came only after he had fought the battle out on his own ground. In some way this freed him, and exorcised the spell Ireland had cast over him for so long. Joyce never became free of Irish bonds, or of the influence of Jesuit training. He suffered, and still suffers (*Finnegans Wake* stands as recent proof) from an intense *mal du pays*, against which his “silence, exile, and cunning” have availed him nothing. And Joyce’s tendency to schematize, to make into dogma, to reduce the universal to the particular and see “unity” in diversity, at the root of all his writing, is profoundly Jesuitical as well as Aristotelian. In *Ulysses* Dublin becomes the known world of the ancients, the Mediterranean. In *Finnegans Wake* Dublin is the point in Vico’s circle from which the circumference springs, and to which it returns. It is as though, to change the figure, Joyce had explored the surface of Dublin, in *Ulysses*, and in *Finnegans Wake*, under an even deeper compulsion, had dug beneath the city, into its very foundations in place, and its very beginnings in time. It is the center of his exile’s thought, and the tie his artist’s cunning has never been clever enough finally to cut. To put one of Yeats last poems against a page of *Finnegans Wake* proves one thing, if one only: Yeats succeeded in cutting the tie.

Joyce’s fight against poverty and blindness, his spirit, his malice,

and his character, complicated beyond the point of ambiguity, come out almost in spite of Gorman's elementary charting of the career. Gorman does not indulge in any literary criticism. And it is apparent that the deep reflection of Joyce, the man and artist, is not managed. That reflection, perhaps, has already been supplied us in the dark glass of *Finnegans Wake*, and will become clear when the final exegesis of that work (as extraordinary an example of sheer "cunning" as was ever devised by man), has been given its imprimatur by Joyce himself. For in this way were the Doctors of the Church explained and glossed.

The book contains a series of interesting photographs.

LOUISE BOGAN

A PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

LANGUAGE AND REALITY. By Wilbur Marshall Urban. Macmillan. \$5.50.

Language as an instrument of thought and communication has been the concern of students since antiquity, and it is not a recent discovery that its uncritical use generates unintelligent problems and profound confusions. Nevertheless, contemporary students of the subject are fortunately situated for carrying on their work: they have at their disposal a critical comparative philology, a culturally oriented psychology and anthropology, a mature examination of scientific methods, and, not least, a supple and comprehensive logical apparatus. As a consequence, a body of reliable knowledge is now available concerning the development, the functions, the limitations, and the conditions for the operation of various kinds of languages—a body of knowledge which far exceeds in scope and adequacy the best that traditional speculations on language can offer.

But this body of knowledge is still incomplete and unsystematized. There are many gaps in our information and analyses, and the bearings upon each other of different approaches to the study of language are still far from clear. Moreover, the techniques of analysis for resolving confusions arising from the misuse of language have still not been completely mastered and organized even by outstanding students in the field—to say nothing of popularizers such as Arnold, Chase, and Korzybski, whose qualification to write upon such matters consists chiefly in an unbounded enthusiasm and the crudest kind of empiricism. A generalized and systematic theory of language and symbolism, worked out with attention to details of application, is a genuine contemporary need.

Professor Urban's book does not fill this need, although it is an attempt to do so. But it must be acknowledged that he views the subject in a broad perspective and examines not only the central issues of a theory of language—e.g., its origin and development, the conditions of

its significant use—but also the rôle of symbolism in poetry, science, religion, and philosophy. The book makes abundantly clear that language and its categories enter constitutively into all knowledge, that linguistic forms are not passive copies of an antecedently determinate existence, that a sensationalistic empiricism does not succeed in giving a coherent account of the phenomena of communication, and that no criteria for meaningful discourse can be adequate which fail to take into account the cultural contexts in which language functions. Mr. Urban cannot be justly charged with overlooking the enormously complex character of language nor with offering panaceas, in the form of “semantical rules,” for intellectual and social maladjustments.

But if he does not throw out any children with the bath, he nevertheless does not keep his water very clean. His book is indeed not concerned with the phenomena of language for their own sake, and it yields very little in the form of critical principles for clarifying scientific and other types of discourse. Its far-ranging erudition on matters connected with language is brought together apparently and mainly for the sake of providing additional support for Mr. Urban’s previously formulated philosophy. His treatise is thus in large measure a “fundamentalist and traditionalist” tract against naturalism and positivism, and against current tendencies which challenge the meaningfulness of traditional philosophic idealism. Accordingly, Mr. Urban’s main critical task is that of showing that behaviorism and naturalism have neglected the “unique” characteristics of language and that they have failed to “reduce” communication to anything unlike itself; for he maintains that the phenomena of language cannot be “explained” in terms of non-linguistic facts and cannot be made to fall within the scope of the natural sciences. On the other hand, Mr. Urban’s positive argument consists in specifying certain idealistic or spiritualistic conditions for the meaningful use of language, and in interpreting the traits of communication so as to support an essentially theistic cosmology. Only by extreme courtesy can most of his long and repetitious book be regarded as a contribution to the understanding of the function of language.

It will be sufficient, therefore, to discuss briefly just two issues which Mr. Urban’s argument raises. The first concerns the conditions of what he calls “intelligible communication”—communication using language to convey meanings not restricted to momentary occasions. He first argues that a naturalistic account of these conditions (e.g., in terms of the organic similarity of the participants and the similarity of their environment) is unsatisfactory, in part because there is an unbridgeable hiatus between men and animals, so that human speech must be regarded as an “emergent” not “reducible” to pre-human behavior. Moreover, biology cannot supply any clues as to the conditions of communication, because origins affect validity—“what speech was originally made for determines in some significant way what it is capable of doing now.” Mr. Urban’s view is that for intelligible communication there must be a mutual acknowledgment

of values by the participants, a "supra-empirical" unity of mind or self; accordingly, intelligible communication can be understood only in terms of "transcendental presuppositions." In contrast to the naturalistic account, his idealistic theory maintains the "primacy of spirit which lives in human discourse working as a totality."

To the extent that Mr. Urban's "underlying unity of spirit" can be interpreted as referring to the cultural context of language (a context which must itself be specified behavioristically), his account is undoubtedly superior to those views which attempt to explain communication in terms of alleged similarities between the sensations of socially isolated individuals. But he does not countenance such an interpretation, and the conditions of communication are for him "supra-empirical." In that case, however, has he done anything more than to give a fancy name for the bare *fact* that there is such a thing as communication? If conditions cannot be specified in such a way that empirical evidence becomes relevant for determining whether those conditions exist, are we not merely saying the same thing twice over when we assert that a transcendental unity of self is the condition for communication? To say that *A* can exist if and only if *B* exists, makes good sense only if there is a possibility of identifying the existence of *B* without having first to establish the existence of *A*. Failure to conform to this simple canon of procedure leaves the gate wide open for every sort of *deus ex machina* to save us from the embarrassment of ignorance; and Mr. Urban does not hesitate to drive boldly through such a breach. It may indeed be a fact that human speech is an "emergent" in the sense that it cannot be *explicitly* defined in terms of something that is not human speech. But such a fact would provide no more reason for denying that the conditions for its occurrence can be specified in behavioristic terms, than does the fact that economic wars or chemical atoms are not definable in terms of perceptible qualities prevent the occurrence of wars or electrons from being specified in terms of such qualities.

The second issue Mr. Urban raises is that of the criteria of linguistic validity or meaningful discourse. There is a formula, made fashionable by current popularizers of "semantics" and designated by Mr. Urban as the criterion of "empirical verifiability," according to which a statement is meaningless if its referend is incapable of direct observation. This formula he rightly dismisses as unduly narrow, since on its basis most statements would have to be declared as without sense. He therefore proposes a more suitable criterion, called "verifiability by authentication." It is not easy to grasp what Mr. Urban has in mind. He declares, however, that although we cannot empirically verify such statements as that a given poem conveys the truth of life, or that an act is a proud one, or that a fellow-creature is in pain, or that atoms have certain properties, we can nevertheless "authenticate" such statements as being significant. We can authenticate them in so far as we can apprehend in some way the truth of the poem, or emotionally intuit the quality of the proud act, or mutually acknowledge the pains of others, or recognize the reasonableness

of the scientific statement. Indeed, in distinguishing the meaningful from the unmeaning, we distinguish between the true and the false; for according to Mr. Urban "the true and the meaningful finally tend to coincide."

Since Mr. Urban's views on authentication as the criterion of the meaningful are safely obscured by vagueness and lack of exact statement, it is not possible to evaluate them explicitly. It should be noted, however, that his victory over naturalism and empiricism is a victory over straw men. For the principle of empirical verifiability which he dismisses as being intellectually stultifying is not the only alternative to his notion of authentication. What critical naturalists and behaviorists insist upon is that factual meaning accrues to such statements only for which observational evidence is relevant. Consequently, if a statement in a given context can not be directly tested by observation, then with the help of acknowledged rules of inference other statements must be derivable from it which are capable of a direct experimental test. This is a simple and intelligible criterion, frequently difficult to apply in practice, but which requires us in principle to control all statements of the non-formal kind by empirical evidence. Unlike Mr. Urban's principle of authentication, it does not permit us to postulate anything we please. In particular, it does not permit us to assert with him that there are "co-implicates of experience" shown forth in the very process of communication, but for which there is not one cogent bit of empirical evidence—co-implicants such as the transcendental mutuality of mind or the identity of value and reality. Finally, by distinguishing between the meaningless and the false, this principle of critical naturalism does not commit us to the cosmic arrogance and discourtesy of having to judge everyone whom we deem to be mistaken to be simply speaking nonsense.

ERNEST NAGEL

CYRENAIC SONG

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF A. E. HOUSMAN. Henry Holt. \$3.00.

The songs of Shakespeare, the Scottish border ballads, and the lyrics of Heine, were, by Housman's own account, the chief literary influences on his poetry. Even without this acknowledgment, one would recognize in his verse the bitter-sweet savor, the clear melody, that distinguish the *Buch der Lieder*. But given the hint, one may readily discover here too the seemingly effortless purity of line that makes memorable Shakespeare's slightest lyrics, and also that mingling of the fateful and the familiar that is the special quality of balladry. Housman shared with the poets he admired the trick of setting the wild and the homely together so as to make each a foil for the other, and to communicate a piercing sense of the tears of things. Above all, he shared their gift of song, a lyricism as near as words can come to the magic of Mozart, a feeling for verbal texture so

right that it produces in the listener the physical effect that was his own touchstone for poetry: the skin bristles, the blood runs cold in the vein.

There is little that is new in this collection. Here are the lyrics of *A Shropshire Lad*; the contents of the *Last Poems*, so-called because they were the last the poet himself saw through the press; the verses that, after Alfred Housman's death, his brother was expressly "permitted but not enjoined" to select for publication from his notebooks, together with three translations, from Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, respectively. His literary executor has added five lyrics to those included in his memoir on the poet but omitted from *More Poems*. These five are, with one exception, not of outstanding interest. The exception is the final lyric, which, unfortunately, is not listed in the Chronology of Poems which follows the careful Note on the Text. If the greater part of his work was composed, as seems probable, about the time of those which bear dates, then Housman's most prolific period was 1895, with brief spurts of activity in 1900, 1905, and 1922, and almost nothing produced in the intervals. The last dated piece was that written in 1925 for his own funeral. Housman died on April 30, 1936, precisely two years and nine months before Barcelona fell. Yet this lyric, "The Olive," one of the few which bears a title, might well have been called *Elegy for Spain*:

*The olive in its orchard
Should now be rooted sure,
To cast abroad its branches
And flourish and endure.*

*Aloft amid the trenches
Its dressers dug and died;
The olive in its orchard
Should prosper and abide.*

*Close should the fruit be clustered
And light the leaf should wave,
So deep the root is planted
In the corrupting grave.*

History has given this lyric an adventitious significance. Like the greater part of his work, however, it has a universal validity.

His themes are the permanent themes: unhappy love, natural beauty, death, the triumph of time. He is capable of hot resentment: witness such a piece as the nameless one beginning:

*Oh who is that young sinner with the handcuffs on his wrists?
And what has he been after that they groan and shake their fists?
And wherefor is he wearing such a conscience-stricken air?
Oh they're taking him to prison for the colour of his hair.*

"The Defeated," a new lyric, concludes with the stern injunction:

*Amid rejoicing and song
Remember, my lads, how long,
How deep the innocent trod
The grapes of the anger of God.*

But for the most part his indignation is less savage than morose. It is seldom that he varies the grim admonition of one of his earliest poems:

*Be still, be still, my soul; it is but for a season:
Let us endure an hour and see injustice done.*

His counsels of despair are not those that will rouse youth to march upon

*The hell-defended height
Where Virtue beckons plain.*

Indeed, in verse which speaks repeatedly of the soldier's task, the trumpet-calls are few and, as often as not, end on a sour note. The music is apt to be elegiac rather than challenging, or else it carries the ring of a severe stoicism.

Yet in an evil time Housman's unblinking confrontation of evil has a peculiar value. And since, whatever battles are lost or won, the personal life is inevitably touched with tragedy, his honest measure of its shames, frustrations and defeats holds the solace that comes with an acceptance, however reluctant, of immedicable griefs and irremediable wrongs. This effect of his verse is not wholly due to his philosophy. It is largely the result of the technical skill which lifts out of their cruel matrix the thoughts that plague his mind and the torments that squeeze his heart. The sure fingering of certain lines and stanzas is unforgettable. The whole lovely texture of "The Lent Lily," the dreadful final stanza of "Eight O'clock" and the liquid second stanza of "Tell me not here, it needs not saying," the echoing cry: "O Queen of air and darkness," the perfect cadence at the close of "Fancy's Knell," such inimitable lyrics as "I to my perils" and "Tarry, delight, so seldom met," the matchless rendering of "Nous n'irons plus au bois," all these and how many more beauties give his work the unwithering charm of the poetry on which it was patterned, while the accent remains unmistakably his own. How true Housman's ear was, may be judged from the fact that even his light verse, which, properly enough, is not included here, is alive with the same music. In the face of these poems alike his scholarly achievements and his private distresses seem irrelevant. These are over and done, and those have a dusty odor. His art is fresh and firm. His verse endures.

BABETTE DEUTSCH

Letters

FROM FRANCE

Sirs:

Thank you for sending me the two recent issues of *PARTISAN REVIEW*. I must confess I was a bit disappointed with the contents. From a literary point of view, it is up to its usual standard. But I missed your editorials and your firm and outspoken fashion of dealing with contemporary events. The "London Letter" might have appeared in the *New Yorker*. And if it had not been for the "Paris Letter," one would have thought you did not know there was a war going on. It's all right criticizing the Stalinites, but is it sufficient? Spender's "Journal" made me sick. Do you share his point of view of the "lesser evil"? I did not think such a muddled and equivocal piece of thinking would have found a place in your magazine. Or do you publish it for the interesting ideas on music, art and life, and so on? In other words, are you becoming eclectic and do you think, as one of your readers suggests, that the title of the magazine ought to be changed? It is a pity, because I liked so much the tone of last year's issues. . . .

Yours faithfully,

JEAN

Savoie, April 28.

—*The omission of the editorials in the first two issues of this year was due to technical, not principled, reasons. We certainly do not agree with Mr. Spender about the "lesser evil." See editorial by D. M. in last issue. Yes, we did publish Spender's "Journal" for its ideas on art and music (and Germany) and for its literary quality. The sort of eclecticism which prints things for their literary value, even if politically they disagree with one's own views—this sort of compromise, if you want to call it that, we feel to be necessary in putting out a cultural magazine like PARTISAN REVIEW. We have always been "eclectic" in this sense.—Ed.*

ON EDITORIAL CONSISTENCY

Sirs:

Independent judgment is a great virtue in editors; but it seems to me that Mr. Rahv and Mr. MacDonald ought to get together and have a talk.

In his last editorial, Mr. Rahv observed, sensibly if belatedly, that orthodox Marxists have grossly overrated the vigor and virtue of the proletariat *per se*. He concluded as sensibly that "the question of leadership has become so central that it requires a complete theoretical overhauling." And of course he doesn't like at all what has happened to the revolution in Russia.

In his editorial Mr. MacDonald pointed to the "social revolution" as the "only way out" of our present nightmare; he criticized, as an example of the notorious unrealism of liberals, Stephen Spender's decision to support the "Chamberlain system" against Fascism as the lesser of two evils. Now, one might remark that in this imperfect world the choice of the lesser evil is a very realistic one; it is the choice actually and necessarily made by most men in most of their affairs. One might add that the "Chamberlain system" (even before the resignation of its figurehead) was a much less accurate or comprehensive definition of England than "Fascism" is of Hitler's Germany. But if MacDonald wants us to put our faith in the revolution, he ought to begin at least some theoretical overhauling. How does he expect to meet this central problem of leadership? Even granted that the masses of England, France, Germany, America, etc., are ripe for the revolution (a highly dubious assumption), where are their leaders? And what is to be done meanwhile about the not at all theoretical problems raised by Hitler? In other words, precisely what does Mr. MacDonald propose to do, and how does he propose to do it?

By the time your next issue appears, it is of course probable that Hitler will have created some new nightmares, and made these questions a little academic. Meanwhile, however, our advanced social thinkers might display some of the realism they are always appealing to. As it is, their reliance on the old slogans and

passwords reminds one of Mencken's summary of religion: Let us have faith in God, who has always fooled us in the past.

Sincerely yours,
HERBERT J. MULLER

Tasco, Mexico

—Rahv and I have had many talks together, and I agree with most of what he said in his editorial. But to agree that Marxist leadership has shown serious weaknesses in our time and that "a complete theoretical overhauling" is long overdue, this is not to thereby underwrite bourgeois democracy. I am not at all impressed with the record of Messers. the democrats in fighting Hitlerism. For a fuller exposition of my views on these matters I refer the reader to my article in this issue.—D. M.

FOR THE RECORD

Sirs:

For the sake of the record, I wish you would be so good as to publish the following in your correspondence column in your July-August issue:

I had thought that, from the nature of my manuscript and from my letter which accompanied it, you would find it quite obvious that "A Goat For Azazel" was not "a story."

It is, rather, a chapter from a carefully documented biographical study of Cotton Mather, a Boston Congregationalist minister of the mid-seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. I drew all the material for "A Goat For Azazel" from his own account of the episode as published in his "Magnalia Christi Americana." There is good reason to doubt the accuracy of some of his statements, but I wish to repeat here what I wrote in my letter to you explaining the sources of the manuscript: "I have added no fictions of my own."

With my best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER

Baton Rouge, La.

MUSEUM TRUSTEE OBJECTS

Sirs:

Mr. G. L. K. Morris has chosen to attack the Museum of Modern Art from

the angle of the American abstract painter. In this letter I have no room to answer some of the statements he makes, but I do wish to draw attention to the extraordinarily limited point of view taken by Mr. Morris.

The Museum of Modern Art is not intended for painting only, but Mr. Morris seems to be interested only in that. In the fields of films, library, sculpture, ballet, industrial design, and travelling exhibitions, the Museum has done work of great importance, with the greatest competence, and with much experimental direction. He makes practically no mention of this fact or, least of all, does he mention that the Museum's direction inspired the holding of the Wheaton College Competition, 1938, and the Smithsonian Museum Competition, 1939, and in many other ways have been most forward-looking in the field of building and architecture. He refers in a depreciating way to the temporary quarters in an old private house at 11 West 53rd Street, as "baroque"; which it was not.

The importance of painting is great, but painting is only a small division of art, and it would appear that Mr. Morris cannot consider "modern art" as anything else. Painting is, in fact, becoming more and more a less important element.

At the present time the Museum of Living Art at New York University in Washington Square, also the Art of Tomorrow Museum, at 24 East 54th Street, as well as the annual exhibition of the Abstract Artists group, amply provide opportunities for these painters to display and have the public conveniently see, this particular branch of "contemporary art." The Museum of Modern Art will continue to exhibit some of the better abstract work, and experiments in the field of films, industrial design, architecture, sculpture, etc., as in the past.

Very truly yours,

PHILIP L. GOODWIN.

GEORGE MORRIS REPLIES

I do not agree with Mr. Goodwin that a point of view is "extraordinarily limited" which expects an institution calling itself "Museum of Modern Art" to exhibit the serious contemporary developments in painting and sculpture. Of

course I am glad that the museum has inspired architectural competitions, shown historically important movies, maintained a library, and the rest. Even such ventures as the competition of drawings for P.M. (and the quaint coincidence that three of the museum's trustees are among the financial backers of that periodical) would be easily condoned if the museum in the course of events lived up to what its name implies.

It is Mr. Goodwin's brief third paragraph which I find the most interesting, particularly as it doubtless coincides with the opinions of many of his fellow-trustees. If the type of contemporary work that they support is indicative of their esthetic horizon it is easy to understand why they consider painting to be diminishing in importance as an art. Despite Mr. Goodwin, however, the museum continues to show paintings more than anything else, and a vast number of American works, too. I am told that the abstract movement can be conveniently studied in other New York collections. Although the Whitney Museum and the Metropolitan offer opportunities ad nauseam for inspecting American "social realism," the Modern Museum has never been deterred from continuing a similar crusade.

The trustees, the Museum staff, and Mr. Goodwin would probably answer that they do not show American abstract works because they do not consider them good. But this excuse is hardly valid even from their own point of view; when particularly noxious work has been exhibited, those connected with the museum have frequently exclaimed that they did not like it, but that it was the museum's duty to show the public what is being done in the world regardless of personal preferences. I hope that the museum will not only continue to show some of the better abstract work, as Mr. Goodwin promises, but that they will present a wider variety, with perhaps a glimpse of what is being done in America.—G.L.K.M.

NEWARK OBJECTS

Sirs:

I am quite sure that within the next few days you will be deluged with irate

letters from the citizens of Newark, New Jersey who had the misfortune to allow their eyes to fall upon a descriptive article composed by a Mr. David Chanler.

Your author is one of those literary infants who is still attracted by the lurid glow of the mire worm. It is easy enough to collect sordid details and run a lascivious pen about them, but only an intelligent man and a true artist can see the whole personality of a great city and not only that portion of its soul which is unfortunately, but quite naturally, darker than the poor pages upon which Mr. Chanler writes.

Sincerely,

IAN MCGREAL

Oberlin, O.

MORE ON MARITAIN

Sirs:

Sidney Hook's essay on Jacques Maritain and his "integral humanism" is extraordinarily penetrating. As you may know, Maritain is now preaching his doctrine all over the United States. I attended one of his lectures at a Catholic University (Georgetown) here. Most conspicuous in the audience were a number of college girls who apparently wanted to catch up on their French. But the presence of the French Ambassador, sitting in the first row, gave to the occasion an official "cachet."

Before this audience Maritain appeared in his dual role of patriot and Thomist. Completely ignoring confusions and contradictions, he exposed at great length his solution to the present crisis. He knew exactly how Europe should be organized at the end of the War: the basis of new Europe must be Federalism. But: "Federal Europe can only exist if Christian spirit makes her exist." There has to be a necessary transformation of liberalism, brought about by the "Captains of industry." Parallely, integral humanism requires a transformation of religious consciousness. "Man must be educated toward liberty." There followed a sentimental passage on angelic goodness, family love, fraternal friendship, a "love born in the vermin of the trenches," etc., which will be characteristic of the new European citizen. The existence of the "pro-

fane world" is the justification for pluralism. Then Maritain asked: "Will there be a rebirth of the chivalry of spiritual heroism?" And he concluded by saying that the master of integral humanism, Saint Thomas Aquinas, must be the great spiritual leader of this new world.

It is sad to say that Maritain, mainly because of his mystical defense of "la personne humaine," has some influence over French youth. As Hook points out, he is famous for rigorous argumentation, and this attracts many dissatisfied intellectual weaklings. Hook's flawless analysis presents this philosopher completely stripped of rhetoric glamour; his article should be read by all those who still are blind enough to believe in such anachronic solutions as "integral humanism."

Very truly yours,

N. ERTEGUN

Washington, D. C.

SAROYAN ON P. R.

Sirs:

The back issues of the magazine which I ordered have come, thanks very much. I am catching up on the stuff I missed,

almost all of which I have enjoyed very much: especially Mr. Schwartz's story America, America, a very fine piece of work; the T. S. Eliot poem, and Miss McCarthy's review of my first two plays. (The magazines came yesterday; haven't read much; Williams is more right than you are about that poetry review, although the review, like the poems it reviews very likely, is good only here and there, and very bad steadily—if you want air to get in, let it come from a height. It don't matter enough to go to war over, though, as the saying is. The fellow who figures the name of the magazine should be changed may have something, but there is always the possibility that the fellow's name should be changed, too; also mine; and anybody else's. I believe your reputation or status is anti-Stalin, or anti-Stalinism; it should be anti a good deal more than that, which is relatively not so much. Intelligence will always quarrel with intelligence, faith with faith, and so on, and in the meantime art moves farther and farther away from the people, and mischief (political) closer and closer.

With all good wishes,

WILLIAM SAROYAN

Baltimore, Md.

CONTRIBUTORS

HORACE GREGORY's most recent book of verse was *Chorus For Survival*. . . . LOUIS MACNEICE is at present in the United States; he is writing a book on William Butler Yeats. . . . KARL J. SHAPIRO, who studied at the University of Virginia and Johns Hopkins University, is a resident of Baltimore. He published in 1935 a volume, *Poems*, and has in preparation a second, *Trauma*. . . . EMMA SWAN has published verse in New Directions and elsewhere; she lives in New York. . . . MORTON D. ZABEL writes from San Francisco that he is having "a beautiful trip through these stupefying parts of America, and this town is one of the two or three good ones on the continent." . . . REUEL DENNEY's first book of verse, *Connecticut River and Other Poems*, was published last year in the Yale Series of Younger Poets. . . . IVAN GOLL is a Swiss who lived for many years in Paris and has recently come to the United States. The character of Jean Sans Terre has figured in a number of his poems. . . . JAMES T. FARRELL has just completed the third volume of his new long novel. . . . LOUISE BOGAN reviews poetry for *The New Yorker*. . . . ERNEST NAGEL is a member of the philosophy department of Columbia University. . . . BABETTE DEUTSCH is the author of several books of verse; she lives in New York. . . . GORDON SYLANDER is a young poet living in Madison, Wis. . . . PAUL GOODMAN is on the faculty of the University of Chicago.

S. O. S. FROM EUROPE!

We have just received a letter from one of our contributors, a well-known anti-fascist novelist and critic:

By some luck I managed to flee Paris at the very last minute. We have been traveling in freight trains, spending the nights in the fields. In a little village in the Loire country we were so tired that we lay down behind some stones and slept through an entire bombardment without waking once. Nowhere, in this completely chaotic world, were we able to find any asylum. Finally the roads were barred and we were stranded in the small village in the south from which I am writing you. I do not think I will be able to remain here since I know no one and have neither roof nor money nor chance of earning anything.

Of all I once owned—clothes, books, writings—I was able to save only what my friends and I could carry away on our backs in knapsacks. It is very little but fortunately includes the manuscripts which I have already begun. All my material resources have disappeared. I am cut off from the world.

This letter is a sort of S.O.S. which I hope that you will also communicate to my known and unknown friends in America. I have no money for stamps; I will be able to send off perhaps one or two letters but that is all. I must ask you to immediately undertake some action of material aid for me. I have scarcely a hundred francs left: we are eating only one meal a day and it is a very poor one at that. I don't at all know how we are going to hold out.

There are hundreds of anti-fascist writers in Europe today who have no political party to help them and whose only hope lies in aid from America. Some sort of clearing-house for information about these cases, some channel by which funds can be raised for them and sent to them, some group which will help them get out of a Europe where they are in constant danger—these things seem to us to be urgently needed. As a first step in this direction, we are setting up the **PARTISAN REVIEW FUND FOR EUROPEAN WRITERS AND ARTISTS.**

All contributions received will be turned over to the **INTERNATIONAL RELIEF ASSOCIATION**, 2 West 43rd Street, New York City, earmarked for the artists and writers we want to help. This organization (Charles A. Beard, Chairman; Sheba Strunsky, Executive Secretary) has had much experience in refugee relief work.

WE APPEAL TO OUR READERS NOT TO FAIL THE ARTISTS AND WRITERS OF EUROPE.



The Partisan Review Fund for European Writers and Artists

P. O. Box 34, Station D, New York City

NANCY MACDONALD, *Treasurer* Please make checks payable to **PARTISAN REVIEW.**

Silone adds his voice!

(See page 313 for letter received just as we go to press.)

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